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LINCOLN AND LIQUOR









LINCOLN

*Frontispiece*

# LINCOLN AND LIQUOR

BY  
DUNCAN C. MILNER  
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## FOREWORD

At the opening of the nineteenth century Napoleon Bonaparte was the commanding figure of the world. The hero of the new century is Abraham Lincoln. While identified with the Civil War as commander-in-chief of the victorious armies, no man ever suffered more than he on account of that terrible conflict. In vivid contrast with the famed Corsican, he was ever in great-hearted, tender sympathy with human suffering and misfortune. He lacked utterly that traditional ambition of other rulers of men which gratifies self-seeking interests even at the cost of suffering and death to their fellow-men.

Lincoln's soul revolted at war, yet he realized that, as things were, war must be; and he it was who, in the face of cries for peace at any price, said: "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in."<sup>1</sup>

It was to be expected that men would try to conjure with the great name of Lincoln. He has been claimed as a follower even by atheists and spiritualists. Those who favor liquor-drinking and liquor-selling have made special efforts to identify him with their cause. Many volumes have been published treating of Lin-

<sup>1</sup>Second Inaugural Address.

coln's religious faith and his relation to slavery. When we think of the great controversies on the subjects of intemperance and slavery we cannot but realize that Lincoln must have had vital relations with both subjects. It will surely, therefore, be not only reasonable but profitable as well to publish all the facts as to his relations to the temperance reform.

Wine and strong drink have a large place in the literature of many nations. College students find praises of wine abounding in their classical studies, and many college songs have a decided bacchanalian flavor. Poets, from Horace to Robert Burns, have glorified wine and liquor-drinking. For ages men accepted the dominance of drink and the facts of drunkenness as necessities of human nature. Dickens' pictures of the drink debauchery in the England of his day are paralleled in the customs and conditions surrounding the Great Emancipator.<sup>2</sup> The marvel about

<sup>2</sup> Dickens was a contemporary of Lincoln. In coming days, when drink will be banished from the daily life of respectable people and when a drunkard will be a curiosity, it will be difficult for readers of Dickens to understand his persistent references to the use of all kinds of liquors. While he gives harrowing pictures of poverty and suffering caused by drink, and some of his drunkards are disgusting and horrible, it must be said that his celebration of social drinking has a tendency to make attractive the use of intoxicants.

G. K. Chesterton, in his critical study of Dickens, resents the criticism by temperance reformers "of the Bacchic element in the books of Dickens," but admits that the great novelist "did defend drink clamorously, praised it with passion, and described whole orgies of it with enormous gusto." And he adds: "Yet it is wonderfully typical of his prompt and impatient nature that he himself drank comparatively little." He also declares that Dickens praised wine-drinking "because it was a great human institution—one of the rites of civilization." This "glit-

Lincoln is that in the midst of almost universal drinking he not only grew up entirely free from the habit but, from his early youth, was consistently antagonistic to drink.

Total abstinence and prohibition had small place in the thoughts of the people of Lincoln's day. There was general acceptance of the idea, however, that alcoholic liquors were a necessity. In everyday life they were a part of hospitality and supposed good cheer; in sickness they were regarded as sovereign remedies. Alcoholic liquor was called *aqua vitæ*, the water of life.

Since this book was prepared for the press there has been published a most interesting book by Dr. Ervin Chapman, entitled "Latest Light on Abraham Lincoln," which contains the most extended account hitherto published on "Lincoln and Temperance."

My dear friend, the Rev. Dr. Edward C. Ray, of Santa Barbara, Cal., read my early notes on the subject of this book, and urged its completion and publication.

Judge Robert McMurdy, of Chicago, the eminent

tering generality," however, makes a poor apology for the horrors of the drink traffic and the brutality of the alcohol habit so conspicuous in England.

In Dickens' time there was little social consciousness of the drink evil. One can but think that if he could have had the modern knowledge obtained from scientific discovery and experiment, and the results of social and economic study as to the liquor scourge, he might have written the "Uncle Tom's Cabin" of the temperance reform, and added to his crown the glories of another revolution in the uplift of human society. Because the world is awakening from its alcoholic stupor, we now seem to be approaching the end of the temperance controversy.

lawyer and devoted friend of philanthropy, aided me with many suggestions.

The late Jenkin Lloyd Jones,—the founder of Abraham Lincoln Centre of Chicago,—the man who led in the discovery of Lincoln's birthplace, who was instrumental in its rescue from pollution as the site of a distillery, and whose "love for and veneration of the martyr-president" was said "by a friend" to be "the consuming passion of Mr. Jones' life,"—urged the publication of the book, on the ground that it was not simply a temperance document but an addition to the Lincoln literature.

THE AUTHOR.

# LINCOLN AND LIQUOR

## CHAPTER I

### DRINK IN PIONEER DAYS

During the childhood and youth of Abraham Lincoln liquor-drinking was almost universal, and that period in American history has been described as one of sad debauchery. Robert Ellis Thompson writes:

At the opening of the century it really seemed as if the manhood of America was about to be drowned in strong drink. The cheapness of untaxed intoxicants—rum, whiskey, and apple-jack, made by any one who chose to undertake the business and sold at every gathering of the people without reference to the age or sex of the purchaser—had made drunkenness almost universal. Samuel Brech, writing at the close of the eighteenth century, says that “it was impossible to secure a servant—white or black, bond or free—who could be depended on to keep sober for twenty-four hours. All classes and professions were affected. The judge was overcome on the bench; the minister sometimes staggered on his way to the pulpit. When a church had to be built, the cost of the rum needed would be greater than that of the lumber or the labor employed. When an ecclesiastical

convention of any kind was to be entertained it was a question how much strong drink would be required for the reverend members.”<sup>1</sup>

In “A History of American Christianity,” we are told that “the long struggle of the American Church against drunkenness as a social and public evil began at an early date,” but while there were indications of a public sentiment against the evils of drink, it “did not prevent the dismal fact of a wide prevalence of drunkenness as one of the distinguishing characteristics of American society at the opening of the nineteenth century. . . . Seven years of army life with its exhaustion and exposure and military social usage had initiated into dangerous drinking habits many of the most justly influential leaders of society, and the example of these had set the tone for all ranks. . . . Gradually and unobserved the nation had settled down into a slough of drunkenness of which it is difficult for us at this date to form a clear conception. In the prevalence of intemperate drinking habits the clergy had not escaped the general infection. The priest and the prophet had gone astray through strong drink.”<sup>2</sup> Weddings were, as a rule, drinking frolics. Christmas, New Year’s day, and other holidays were times of excessive drinking and drunkenness. College commencements and other functions, and even ministers’ ordinations and installations, were not considered complete without a supply of liquors.

<sup>1</sup> Thompson, “The Hand of God in American History,” p. 119.

<sup>2</sup> Bacon. “A History of American Christianity,” p. 285.

The Rev. Lyman Beecher thus describes the ordination of a minister at Plymouth, Connecticut, in 810:

At this ordination the preparation for our creature comforts besides food included a broad sideboard covered with decanters and bottles. and sugar and pitchers of water. There we found all kinds of liquors then in vogue. The drinking was apparently universal. This preparation was made by the society as a matter of course. When the consociation arrived, they always took something to drink around, also before public services, and always on their return. As they could not all drink at once, they were obliged to stand and wait as people do when they go to mill. When they had all done drinking and taken to pipes and tobacco, in less than fifteen minutes there was such a smoke you could not see. The noise I cannot describe. It was the maximum of hilarity. They told their stories and were at the height of jocose talk.<sup>3</sup>

This describes happenings, not on the rough and wild frontier, but at a most solemn religious meeting in staid and cultured New England. At a noted college in Virginia, when the corner stone of a new building was laid, one of the trustees generously provided a barrel of whiskey for the occasion. The head of the barrel was removed, dippers were provided, and everybody was urged to partake.

A noted Harvard professor, picturing the scenes at commencement in those early days, writes :

<sup>3</sup> Lyman Beecher, "Autobiography."

The entire common, then an unenclosed dust plain, was completely covered on Commencement day, and the night preceding and following it, with drinking-stands, dancing-booths, mountebank shows and gambling-tables; and I have never heard such a horrid din, tumult, and jargon of oath, shout, scream, fiddle, quarreling, and drunkenness as on those two nights.

Col. T. W. Higginson, in his "Recollections," says:

I can remember when the senior class assembled annually around Liberty Tree on Class Day and ladled out bowls of punch for every passer-by, till every Cambridge boy saw a dozen men in various stages of inebriation about the village yard.

Similar stories are told of Yale, Dartmouth, and other colleges. There was a common maxim in those days that no man could be found in one of the colleges who had not been drunk at least once in his life.

The Rev. John Chambers, for over fifty years a Presbyterian minister in Philadelphia, became prominent as an advocate of temperance. Much disturbed by the common custom of serving liquor at funerals, he gave notice from his pulpit that he would enter no house where liquors were supplied. On one occasion, coming to the door of the house where he was to officiate and seeing glasses and decanters on the table, he refused to enter. Though a heavy rain was falling, when he was invited in out of the wet, his reply was: "No! I'll drown first." He compromised far enough to hold a service at the door, while an elder held an



umbrella over him. This action on the part of the minister made a great sensation, and an elder and some members withdrew from his church.<sup>4</sup>

In 1833 Dr. George B. Cheever, a minister in Salem, Massachusetts, published a pamphlet entitled "Deacon Giles' Distillery." In the form of allegory, Deacon Giles was pictured as running a distillery and also as having a room in his liquor factory where Bibles were sold. In a dream imps entered by night and painted signs on the casks which became visible when they were tapped for retail sale. The inscriptions were of this style:

"Who hath woe? Inquire at Deacon Giles' Distillery."

"Who hath Delirium Tremens?—Insanity and Murder? Inquire at Deacon Giles' Distillery."

At that time there were four distilleries in full blast in Salem, and one of them was run by a deacon who also sold Bibles in his distillery. A relative of his had been drowned in a whiskey vat, and he had a drunken son; and these incidents were also pictured in the dream. The deacon who owned this distillery sued the young minister for libel; and although defended by Rufus Choate, he was sentenced to pay a fine and to thirty days' imprisonment. The women of Salem sympathized with Cheever, furnished his cell with comfortable furniture, and saw that he did not lack good things to eat. As might have been expected, the affair excited great attention, and the pamphlets had a tremendous sale. Dr. Cheever had as successor

<sup>4</sup> Griffis, "John Chambers," p. 51.

to his first pamphlet another entitled "Deacon Jones' Brewery; or Distiller turned Brewer." In this imps were pictured as dancing around the brewery caldrons, casting in noxious and poisonous drugs. There were no further prosecutions, but the two "dreams" proved to be powerful documents in behalf of the rising temperance reform.

Slavery and intemperance were at that time recognized as twin evils, and the two reforms that aimed at their destruction were in many cases antagonized by the same advocates. Bishop Hopkins of Vermont, who became noted as an apologist for slavery from the standpoint of the Bible, published a book with the title, "The Triumph of Temperance is the Triumph of Infidelity." He declared that the wines of the Bible were all intoxicating liquors, and that the temperance reformers, when urging total abstinence, were doing the work of infidels.

Rev. Dr. J. M. Sturtevant, in a private letter, tells of visiting and worshiping in an old church at Talmadge, Ohio, where he "was shown the wooden vessel which had held the gallon of whiskey given as a prize for the first stick of timber brought to the spot for its construction."

Farmers were compelled to supply liquor to their helpers, and men thought that, without liquor, they could not endure the toil of harvest or thrashing. It was the common belief that men engaged in any form of hard labor needed alcoholic liquors, and they demanded as a right that employers should furnish regular supplies. Mothers and babes were given liquor,

and it was thought of such value that good people said they could not sleep at night without assurance that there was liquor in the house.

While these ideas prevailed in the older portions of the country, the superstitious belief in the need and value of alcoholic liquors was even more prevalent in frontier life. In the pioneer days of Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois the market for the crops was limited, and there was a lack of transportation. There were many small neighborhood distilleries. Corn was made into whiskey because that was easily transported, and it was even used in the payment of debts. Indeed, when Lincoln's father decided to leave Kentucky, he sold his farm and took part of the payment in whiskey.

The liquor saloon, as it now exists, with every device for the encouragement of drinking, was, however, at that time utterly unknown. In the barroom of taverns were small cupboards under lock and key, from which whiskey, brandy, and rum were sold. Whiskey was sold in stores just as molasses and similar commodities were sold.

Although Lincoln was born and grew to manhood in the midst of such conditions, and in an age when such were the popular ideas in regard to drink, he never drank, but was a lifelong total abstainer. When a very young man he was so impressed with the evils of drink that he wrote an essay on temperance,—an essay that made such an impression on the community that a minister asked for a copy and had it printed in an Ohio newspaper. It is possible that this paper may

yet be found.<sup>5</sup> In his mature life, in a very noted address,—hereinafter referred to more fully,—Lincoln spoke of the almost universal use of liquor and said:

When all such of us as have now reached the years of maturity first opened our eyes upon the stage of existence, we found intoxicating liquor recognized by everybody, used by everybody, repudiated by nobody. It commonly entered into the first draught of the infant and the last draught of the dying man. From the sideboard of the parson down to the ragged pocket of the houseless loafer, it was constantly found. Physicians prescribed it in this, that, and the other disease; government provided it for soldiers; and to have a rolling or raising, a husking or hoedown anywhere about, without it, was *positively unsufferable*. So, too, it was everywhere a respectable article of manufacture and of merchandise. The making of it was regarded as an honorable livelihood, and he who could make most was the most enterprising and respectable. Large and small manufactories of it were everywhere erected, in which all the earthly goods of their owners were invested. Wagons drew it from town to town; boats bore it from clime to clime, and the winds wafted it from nation to nation; and merchants bought and sold it, by wholesale and retail, with precisely the same feelings on the part of the seller, buyer, or bystander as are felt at the buying and selling of plows, beef, bacon, or any other of the real necessities of life. Universal public opinion not only tolerated,

<sup>5</sup> Carl Schurz, "Essay—Abraham Lincoln."

"The boy Lincoln, learning to write, practiced on a wooden shovel scraped white, and on a bass wood shingle. Seeing boys put a burning coal on the back of a wood turtle, he was moved to write on cruelty to animals. Seeing men intoxicated with whiskey, he wrote on temperance."

but recognized and adopted its use. It is true that even then it was known and acknowledged that many were greatly injured by it; but none seemed to think the injury arose from the use of a bad thing, but from the abuse of a very good thing.

General Neal Dow gives many illustrations of the sentiment as to liquor. He was born in 1804. Writing of the days of his youth (he and Lincoln were nearly the same age), he says:

Liquor was found place on all occasions. Town meetings, musters, firemen's parades, cattle shows, fairs, and, in short, every gathering of the people of a public or social nature, resulted almost invariably in scenes which, in these days, would shock the people of Maine into indignation, but which were regarded then as a matter of course. Private assemblies were little better. Weddings, balls, parties, huskings, barn-raising, and even funerals, were dependent upon intoxicants, while often religious conferences and ministerial gatherings resulted in an increase of the ordinary consumption of liquors.

The same writer gives an account of the liquors provided at the dedication of a church building. The first minister of that church was warned by his officers to drink less, as he had several times "appeared in such a condition that he could scarcely mount the pulpit stairs." The church, though it at length dismissed him, was so divided by the stand taken against liquor that it was almost wrecked.

General Dow also tells of an early pastor of a Portland church who was making the rounds of the par-

ish. At every house he was expected to "take something," as was the common custom of ministers at that time. The good parson, after accepting many invitations to drink, said:

"Deacon, this will never do; we shall be drunkards together. I will not drink any more."

Another illuminating incident related by General Dow concerns the collapse of the frame of a church, some miles in the country, by which a number of people were injured. The accident was caused by some drunken men engaged in constructing the edifice. When teams came to Portland for doctors to set the broken limbs and repair other damages they found the physicians at some festive gathering in such drunken condition that the injured men had to wait until the next day to get surgical help. It was after this incident that the people made the discovery that men "could do hard work without rum," and one man who built a large house offered the workmen, if they would abstain from strong drink, more than the cost of the liquor ration.<sup>6</sup>

In those days reputable people, some of them officers of the church, sold liquor in their stores. General Dow affirms that an examination of the account books of the country stores from 1820 to 1840 showed that a majority of the entries were for liquor. D. R. Locke (the Petroleum V. Nasby of the *Toledo Blade*), who investigated prohibition in Maine, said that he found one set of books in a village store in which

<sup>6</sup> Neal Dow, "Reminiscences," pp. 159-171.

eighty-four per cent of the entries were for rum. All sorts of clothing and groceries "appeared at rare intervals, but rum was splotted on every page."

One of the men closely associated with Lincoln's life as a young man,—before the future President became a resident of Springfield,—was Dr. John Allen. He was Lincoln's physician at a critical period. At the time of the death of Ann Rutledge, Lincoln's first love and fiancée, his health was broken and he had a protracted illness from chills and fever. Dr. Allen urged Lincoln to go to the home of Bowling Greene, and Greene and his wife, under the good physician's direction, nursed him back to health and strength.

Dr. Allen was noted as a sturdy opponent of both slavery and intemperance. He was an active worker in the Washingtonian movement, and many of the early settlers strongly opposed his crusades against liquor. One of his associates in this temperance work was Rev. John Berry, whose son was Lincoln's partner in the Salem store. Young Berry's drinking habits helped wreck the business. The father, however, had much influence over Lincoln.

Even in the churches of that day there was strong opposition to meddling with the liquor business. Mentor Graham, the school-teacher who helped Lincoln prepare for his surveying work, was a member of the "Hardshell" Baptist Church. He became an ardent advocate of temperance. At a meeting of the church to consider this reform movement, Graham by a unanimous vote was suspended from membership

because of his activities in the cause of total abstinence. At the same meeting the church suspended another member who was found "dead drunk."

An inquisitive member took exception to this action of the congregation. Taking a partly filled flask of liquor from his pocket, he shook it in the face of the congregation, and in the nasal drawls associated with Hardshell religious meetings, said:

"Brethering, you have turned one member out beca'se he would not drink and another beca'se he got drunk, and now I want to ask a question: How much of this 'ere critter does one have to drink to remain in full fellowship in this church?" <sup>7</sup>

The late William Reynolds of Peoria, Illinois, noted as a Sunday-school worker, is authority for the statement that churches of this type resented all interference with slavery or liquor-drinking, and strongly opposed Sunday schools. One of their preachers, according to Mr. Reynolds, took as his text for a sermon: "The gates of hell shall not prevail." There were four gates of hell, he said. The first was those Bible societies that were putting the Scriptures in the hands of the unlearned. The second was the Republican party, which was in favor of freeing the niggers

<sup>7</sup> Rankin, "Personal Recollections," p. 78.

The first American Temperance Society on record was formed in Massachusetts in 1820; and this was the pledge:

"We, the undersigned, recognizing the evils of drunkenness and resolved to check its alarming increase, with consequent poverty, misery, and crime among our people, hereby solemnly pledge ourselves that we will not get drunk more than four times a year, viz., Fourth of July, Muster Day, Christmas Day, and Sheep-Shearing."



and went around preaching nigger equality. The third was the Sunday school, which professed to teach the Scripture but was really getting the young people together for a frolic on the Lord's Day and getting them to hanker after one another. The fourth gate of hell was those temperance societies that went around smelling people's breaths and interfering with the people's personal liberty to take a little something for their stomachs' sake and many infirmities. "But," he concluded, "the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church."



## CHAPTER II

### LINCOLN AS A SUFFERER FROM DRINK

A common saying among apologists for drink has been: "You let liquor alone and it will let you alone." Many facts prove this an untruth. Innocent and abstaining wives and children and sober fathers and mothers are often great sufferers because some one near and dear to them has become a victim of alcoholic liquor. The drink traffic,—producing through its victim poverty, crime, and disease,—lays heavy burdens on the sober part of the community. Many burdensome taxes are caused or increased by the need of caring for criminals, paupers, and people rendered mentally and physically infirm as a result of drink.

When quite a young man Lincoln was returning home one evening with some companions after a hard day's work threshing wheat. They found a man lying by the roadside. He was an old and respectable neighbor, but hopelessly drunk. All efforts failed to rouse the man to help himself. Lincoln's companions said: "He has made his bed; let him lie in it." It was a cold night, and the man would have perished if this inhuman resolution had been carried out. Lincoln, however, without help, took the poor inebriate, who was a big man, on his shoulders, and carried him

a long distance to the cabin of Dennis Hawks, where he built a fire, warmed and rubbed the man, and cared for him during the night. It is recorded that this drunkard reformed and showed a lifelong gratitude to Lincoln for saving his life.<sup>1</sup> Abraham Lincoln carrying that drunken man was typical of the sober community caring for the victims of drink.

While Lincoln was a lifelong abstainer, he suffered many things from drink. His own father was not a drunkard. According to Herndon, he "had no marked aversion for the bottle, but indulged no more freely than the average Kentuckian of his day."<sup>2</sup> There are indications, however, that a number of Lincoln's relatives and friends were victims of drink.

While he was a clerk in the store at New Salem, Lincoln had often to deal with the rude crowds that came to the village. The "Clary's Grove boys" were a lawless, rollicking crowd; and often, under the influence of liquor, committed outrages upon innocent people. Lincoln proved himself their superior in feats of physical strength and gained such power over them that under his pressure many of their ruffian performances were ended.

One of the most painful trials of Lincoln's life was occasioned by his business relations with William F. Berry. Berry and Lincoln formed a business partnership, purchased the groceries of the village, and consolidated them. The partners, having no money, gave their notes for about fifteen hundred dollars.

<sup>1</sup> Lamon, "Life of Lincoln," p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> Herndon and Weik, Vol. I, p. 8.

Berry, who was the son of a Presbyterian minister, was a hard drinker and a gambler. It is said that he spent most of his time drinking liquor, while Lincoln was absorbed in reading, with the result that the business enterprise proved a failure. The drunken partner let Lincoln bear the whole burden of the indebtedness. For fifteen years Lincoln carried the heavy load. He spoke of it often as the "national debt." He told the creditors he would pay them, and they believed him. The notes, with the high interest then prevailing, were finally paid while Lincoln was a member of Congress. Afterwards he told a friend: "That debt was the greatest obstacle in my life." Allen Thorndike Rice says:

Ruined by a drunken partner, he failed, but as money came to him he paid his honest debts.<sup>3</sup>

It is quite in harmony with the cruelty of the alcoholic liquor traffic, which ruined Lincoln's business through his associate, to spread a slander upon the memory of the innocent sufferer. The saloon interests even now try to lend to their traffic a cloak of respectability by using the name of Lincoln and claiming him as a business partner.

Dr. Sturtevant records that when he was a boy he saw Lincoln many times. His father, President Sturtevant, of Jacksonville, one of Lincoln's friends and advisers, came home one day from a trip and said in the family circle: "I saw Abraham Lincoln on the

<sup>3</sup> Rice, "Reminiscences," p. 4.

train. I said to him: 'Many of us are praying for your success at the polls.' Lincoln, as one of those sad flashes passed over his face, replied: 'I don't know, President Sturtevant, I don't know. We are dealing with men who had just as soon lie as not.' " So, after Lincoln's death, the liquor advocates, in their propaganda, have not hesitated to make false statements and have even fabricated speeches in favor of their cause.

Dr. Sturtevant admits that, while Lincoln never was a saloonkeeper, probably as a storekeeper he did for a little while sell liquor, but he adds:

That is not strange, considering the ideas of the time and the circumstances of his bringing-up. But, considering the views of the people with whom I spent my youth, it seems impossible that there could have been anything seriously wrong in Lincoln's habits about the use of liquor, and I never heard of it.

Lincoln's own account of his mercantile experience we find in the short autobiography written in June, 1860, compiled for use in preparing a campaign biography. After his return from the Black Hawk war he was a candidate for the Legislature. This was the first time he ran for office, and, as he says, "the only time he was ever beaten on the direct vote of the people." He was now without means and out of business, but was anxious to remain with his friends, who had treated him with so much generosity, especially as he had nowhere else to go. He studied what he should do: thought of learning the blacksmith trade, thought of trying to study law,—rather thought he

could not succeed at that without a better education. Before long, strangely enough, a man offered to sell and did sell to Lincoln and another as poor as himself an old stock of goods upon credit; and he says that was the store. Of course they did nothing but get deeper and deeper in debt. At that time Lincoln was appointed postmaster at New Salem. The store "winked out."

The advocates of the saloon have not only claimed that Lincoln drank; they have also tried to make it appear that he was a liquor-seller. There can be found in the windows of saloons what is styled, "Reproduction from the original records of the saloon license issued to Abraham Lincoln," published by the National Retail Liquor Dealers' Association.

This document was a "license to keep a tavern" where liquors were to be sold. There is not the slightest evidence that Mr. Lincoln ever knew of the application. His name is signed to the bond, as Miss Tarbell says, "by some other than himself, very likely by his partner," the dissolute Berry heretofore referred to. The partnership had been in a store which, because of Berry's drinking habits and Lincoln's inexperience, was a financial failure, and the debts of which burdened Lincoln many years.<sup>4</sup> Nicolay and Hay say "the tavern was never opened," and yet the liquor people publish a picture of "the building where Abraham Lincoln conducted a saloon."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Tarbell, "Life of Lincoln," Vol. I, p. 96.

<sup>5</sup> "The tavern was never opened, for about this time Lincoln and Berry were challenged to sell out to a pair of vagrant brothers named Trent, who, as they had no idea of paying, were willing to give their notes for any amount. They soon

In the first Lincoln-Douglas debate at Ottawa, August 21, 1858, in his reply to Douglas' statement that he had been a grocery keeper, Lincoln said: "The Judge is woefully at fault about his early friend Lincoln being a grocery keeper. I don't know as it would be a great sin if I had been, but he is mistaken. Lincoln never kept a grocery anywhere in the world. It is true that Lincoln did work the latter part of one winter in a little still house up at the head of a hollow."

The New York *Sun*, in an editorial on "The Little Still House," referring to the charge of Douglas, said:

Of course if he kept a grocery in the days of his young manhood, he sold rum. Wet goods were an invaluable source or attraction of custom in the "store." Deacons vended whiskey and gin. A grocer was a grog-seller, but Lincoln, speaking whimsically in the third person, said he had never kept a grocery, but had worked in a little still house. From this little still house at the head of a hollow grew Douglas' grocery which was transformed into a doggery. It is possible enough that Lincoln's "saloon license" exists in fac-simile as an ornament of saloons. The House that Jack Built is the progressive order of the architecture of myth.

The Lincoln legend-making or folk history goes on. . . . Possibly some wag will yet build the little still house at the end of the hollow, discover it and get an association to buy it. The renewed interest in Lincoln's "liquor

ran away, and Berry expired, extinguished in rum. Lincoln was thus left loaded with debts and with no assets except worthless notes of Berry and the Trents. It is greatly to his credit that he never thought of doing to others as they had done by him; . . . he paid at last every farthing of the debt." Nicolay and Hay, Vol. I, p. 111.



license" may indicate that he is to figure as a witness against the drys.

As to the failure of the store of Berry and Lincoln, Leonard Swett states that Lincoln was absent several months in the Black Hawk war and continues:

As he returned home he found his old partner had been his own best customer at the whiskey barrel, that all the goods were gone, but having failed to pay the debts, there were eleven hundred dollars for which Lincoln was jointly liable. I cannot forget his face of seriousness as he turned to me and said: "That debt was the greatest obstacle I have ever met in life. I had no way of speculating and could not earn money except by labor, and to earn eleven hundred dollars, besides my living, seemed the work of a lifetime. There was, however, but one way. I went to the creditors and told them if they would let me alone I would give them all I could earn over my living, as fast as I could earn it."

Mr. Swett says further:

A difference, however, soon arose between him and his partner in reference to the introduction of whiskey into the establishment. The partner insisted that, as honey catches flies, a barrel of whiskey in the store would invite customers and their sales would increase, while Lincoln, who never liked liquor, opposed this innovation.<sup>6</sup>

Henry B. Rankin refers to "Lincoln's partner in the store at Salem, whose unfortunate habit of drink-

<sup>6</sup> Rice, "Reminiscences," p. 77.

ing brought so great a disaster upon the business that it was not until 1850 that Lincoln was able to pay the last debt of the firm.”<sup>7</sup>

W. H. Herndon, the long-time partner of Lincoln, was a peculiar man with many brilliant gifts and many weaknesses. He is thus described by Joseph Fort Newton:

All through his career, after it had a beginning, he had a hard fight with the drink habit, with many victories and occasional bitter defeats; a battle which Lincoln watched with never-failing pity. That was environment, very tragical in his case and characteristic of the period. But Lincoln knew Herndon, his abilities and his failings, his qualities of mind and heart, and the two men loved each other like brothers of unequal age.<sup>8</sup>

Lincoln, as President and Commander-in-Chief of the army, had a number of painful and perplexing experiences caused by drinking generals. Colonel Maus, for years connected with the regular army, and noted in medical and military affairs, says: “Half of the disasters, both personal and general, in military life were due to alcohol.” The result of a number of battles in the Civil War was affected by the condition of commanders under the influence of drink.

The great reputation of General U. S. Grant cannot now be affected by the true statement that his great career was near wreckage several times because of drink.

<sup>7</sup> H. B. Rankin, p. 78.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph Fort Newton, “Lincoln and Herndon,” p. 18. Dr. Newton is now pastor of the City Temple, London, England.

The case is of so much interest and importance that particulars may be given to show how nearly General John Barleycorn robbed us of our greatest military chieftain.

As a young man, Grant was almost a Puritan in his life and habits. He learned to use both liquor and tobacco during the Mexican War,—after he was twenty-five years of age. He was easily affected by liquor, and a single glass produced a visible effect. He himself fully realized his danger, and after his return from Mexico he helped organize in the barracks a lodge of the "Sons of Temperance," giving its work hearty encouragement.

When promoted to a captaincy Grant was sent to the Pacific coast. There he had dreary surroundings and an unsympathetic commander, and on one occasion, under the influence of liquor, he was unable to perform his duty. His colonel told him to "reform or resign." Grant said: "I will resign and reform." Following his resignation came years of poverty and struggle in St. Louis. He drank at intervals, but through the influence of his wife seemed to win a victory over his habits.<sup>9</sup>

The California record stood in the way of Grant's getting rank and position at the opening of the war. Generals Fremont, McClellan, and Pope treated him as a man with a doubtful past. After he had won recognition and was commissioned as Brigadier-Gen-

<sup>9</sup> Hamlin Garland, "Life of Grant," p. 127. In the lately published letters of Mark Twain there is a remarkable letter on General Grant's drinking habits.

eral there were occasions when he yielded to the old appetite, and it required the loving care of his wife and the devoted friendship of his chief of staff, General Rawlins, to guard him from the danger of drink.

To quote James Ford Rhodes in this connection, he says that at the time of the siege of Vicksburg, while suffering from lassitude and depression during the hot weather, "Grant on one occasion yielded to his appetite for drink." Following this lapse, General Rawlins wrote to Grant the remarkable letter in which he said:

The great solicitude I feel for the safety of this army leads me to mention what I had hoped never again to do, the subject of your drinking. . . . To-night I find you where the wine bottle has just been emptied, in company with those who drink and urge you to do likewise, and the lack of your usual promptness of decision and clearness in expressing yourself in writing tended to confirm my suspicions. . . . You have the full control of your appetite and can let drinking alone. Had you not pledged me the sincerity of your honor early last March that you would drink no more during the war, and kept your pledge during your recent campaign, you would not to-day have stood first in the world's history as a successful military leader. Your only salvation depends upon your strict adherence to that pledge. You cannot succeed in any other way.

Rhodes then relates how "Rawlins removed a box of wine in front of Grant's tent that had been sent him to celebrate his prospective entrance into Vicksburg, and next morning he searched every suspected tent for liq-

uor and broke every bottle he found on a neaby stump." After citing Lincoln's words uttered when Lee was invading Pennsylvania and Hooker was still in command of the Army of the Potomac,—“How much depends in military matters on one master mind!”—Rhodes compares Grant and the Confederate commanders, adding:

“He was a greater general than ‘Stonewall’ Jackson, but he might have been still greater could he have said with Jackson,—changing only the name of Federal to Confederate,—‘I love whiskey, but I never use it; I am more afraid of it than I am of Confederate bullets.’”

And he goes on to say:

“The anxiety of the President and his advisers over the Vicksburg campaign was intense, and their dominant idea as expressed by a friend of Stanton’s was, ‘If we keep Grant sober we shall take Vicksburg.’”<sup>10</sup>

One more reference is made by Rhodes to the weakness of the great General, which overcame him after the unsuccessful attack on Petersburg, when “the bitterness of disappointment drove him for a while to drink.”

According to Rawlins, “Grant digressed from his true path” twice after this, but after the last deviation he pulled himself together and did not again falter. And Rhodes adds:

It was an unclouded brain that carried on the siege of Petersburg to its capture, forced the evacuation of Rich-

<sup>10</sup> James Ford Rhodes, “History of the Civil War,” pp. 255, 256.

mond, and effected the final discomfiture of Lee and the ruin of the Southern Confederacy.<sup>11</sup>

President Lincoln was repeatedly warned as to Grant's habits, but there can be no doubt that the reports as to his excesses were greatly exaggerated. When men visited the President and urged Grant's removal from his high command because he drank, Lincoln said :

"I can't spare this man ; he fights. Tell me the kind of whiskey he drinks ; I should like to send a barrel to some of the other generals."

This bit of grim pleasantry brings to mind the story of King George of England, who, when told that Admiral Nelson of Trafalgar fame was "mad," said : "I will get him to bite some of the other officers."

The case of General Hooker cost Lincoln many hours of anxious suffering. When "Fighting Joe" was appointed to the command of the Army of the Potomac the President had been advised about his weakness for liquor, and plainly warned him about it. At the disastrous battle of Chancellorsville it was charged that during the engagement Hooker drank freely to celebrate his early successes in the battle. General Carl Schurz, however, expresses doubts about Hooker's intoxication at that time. He says :

The weight of competent witnesses is strongly against this theory. It is asserted, on the other hand, that he was accustomed to the consumption of a certain quantity of whiskey every day ; that during the battle he utterly

<sup>11</sup> James Ford Rhodes, "History of the Civil War," p. 325.

abstained from his usual potations, for fear of taking too much inadvertently, and that his brain failed to work because he had not given it the stimulus to which it had been habituated.<sup>12</sup>

General O. O. Howard thus refers to this instance of defeat through drink in the war for the Union:

In one of our great battles we suffered defeat and many of us have believed that the mistake which caused the defeat was due to an excess of whiskey drunk by the officer in command. I had the testimony, from an officer who was with him, that pitchers of liquor were brought to his table and that he and those around him drank as freely from them as if they contained only water. The orders the commander gave were the direct opposite from what he would have given had he not been suddenly confused by drink. A heavy loss of men and material and a dreadful defeat for our cause was the result.<sup>13</sup>

There has been much controversy over General Hooker's apparent stupefaction at the crisis of the battle. Some have believed that he was disabled by the shock of a cannon-ball striking a post near which he was standing.

Secretary of the Navy Welles, in his "Diary," makes this record:

Sumner expresses an absolute want of confidence in Hooker, saying he knows him to be a blasphemous

<sup>12</sup> "Reminiscences of Carl Schurz," Vol. II, p. 430.

<sup>13</sup> "Autobiography of O. O. Howard."

wretch, that after crossing the Rappahannock and reaching Centerville, Hooker exultingly exclaimed, "The enemy are in my power and God Almighty cannot deprive me of them." I have heard before of this, but not so direct or positive. The sudden paralysis that followed when the army, in the midst of a successful career, was suddenly checked and commenced its retreat, has never been explained. Whiskey is said by Sumner to have done the work. The President said that if Hooker had been killed by the shock which knocked over the pillar that stunned him we would have been successful.<sup>14</sup>

The bloody and humiliating defeat at Chancellorsville caused Mr. Lincoln great suffering. Whether we accept the Schurz explanation of Hooker's abstinence from his habitual potations of whiskey or Sumner's belief in his actual drunkenness, drink was the cause of the disaster.

Lincoln's suffering when he received the news of the retreat of the army was most intense. Noah Brooks who, with an old friend of Lincoln's, was waiting in the White House, says:

A door opened, and Lincoln appeared, holding an open telegram in his hand. The sight of his face and figure was frightful. He seemed stricken with death. Almost tottering to a chair, he sat down, and then I mechanically noticed that his face was of the same color as the wall behind him—not pale, not even sallow, but gray like ashes. Extending the dispatch to me, he said with a hollow, far-off voice, "Read it—news from the army." The telegram was from General Butterfield, then, I think,

<sup>14</sup> "Diary of Gideon Welles," Vol. I, p. 336.



chief of staff to Hooker. It was very brief, simply saying that the Army of the Potomac had "safely recrossed the Rappahannock" and was now at its old position on the north bank of that stream. The President's friend, Dr. Henry, an old man and somewhat impressionable, burst into tears, not so much, probably, at the news as on account of its effect upon Lincoln. The President regarded the old man for an instant with dry eyes, and said, "What will the country say? Oh, what will the country say?" He seemed hungry for consolation and cheer, and sat a little while talking about the failure. Yet it did not seem that he was disappointed so much for himself, but that he thought the country would be.<sup>15</sup>

This disaster prompted the striking poem of E. C. Stedman, entitled, "Wanted, A Man." Lincoln was so impressed with it, that he read to his cabinet the poem,<sup>16</sup> which runs:

Back from the trebly crimsoned field  
Terrible words are thunder-tossed;  
Full of the wrath that will not yield,  
Full of revenge for battles lost.  
Hark to their echo, as it crossed  
The capital, making faces wan,  
End this murderous holocaust—  
Abraham Lincoln, give us a *Man!*

No leader to shirk the boasting foe  
And to march and countermarch our brave  
Till they fall like ghosts in the marshes low  
And swamp-grass covers each nameless grave;  
Nor another whose fatal banners wave  
Aye in Disaster's shameful van;  
Nor another to bulster and lie and rave—  
Abraham Lincoln, give us a *Man!*

<sup>15</sup> Noah Brooks, "Life of Lincoln."

<sup>16</sup> Browne, "Every Day Life of Lincoln," p. 494.

Is there never one in all the land,  
One on whose might the Cause may lean?  
Are all the common ones so mean?  
What if your failure may have been  
In trying to make good bread from bran,  
From worthless metal a weapon keen?  
Abraham Lincoln, find us a *Man!*

There is no official record of the large number of officers whose resignations were forced on account of their drink habits, but it is generally known that many were dismissed by courts martial, on account of their conduct while under the influence of liquor.

Mr. Lincoln endured much mortification from the drinking excesses of Vice-President Johnson. "When the Republicans were denouncing Andrew Johnson after his maudlin speech on the 4th of March, 1865, he only said, 'Poor Andy,' and expressed the hope that he would profit by his dreadful mistakes."

In the awful tragedy of Lincoln's assassination liquor had its part. Nicolay and Hay give a vivid description of the scenes associated with that calamity. They refer to the assassin in this way: "Partisan hate and the fumes of brandy had for weeks kept his brain in a morbid state." Booth and his co-conspirators held their councils in saloons and barrooms. "Just before he entered the theater for his murderous attack, he rushed into a near-by saloon, ordered a glass of brandy and gulped it down."<sup>17</sup>

It is a grim comment on the heartlessness as well as the stupidity of the liquor traffic that at the cen-

<sup>17</sup> Nicolay and Hay, Vol. X, p. 295.

ennial celebration of Lincoln's birthday, in this Washington saloon was this notice:

HERE IS WHERE JOHN WILKES BOOTH GOT HIS LAST  
DRINK.

Lord Charnwood, referring to the assassin Booth, said:

In him that peculiarly ferocious political passion which occasionally showed itself among Southerners was further inflamed by brandy and by that ranting mode of thought which the stage develops in some few.<sup>18</sup>

William H. Crook says:

Booth had found it necessary to stimulate himself with whiskey in order to reach the proper pitch of fanaticism.

Speaking of the last days of Lincoln's life, Crook writes:

In crossing over to the War Department we passed some drunken men. Possibly their violence suggested the thought to the President. After we had passed them, Mr. Lincoln said to me, "Crook, do you know I believe there are men who want to take my life?" Then after a pause he said, half to himself, "And I have no doubt they will do it." Crook, dismayed, asked, "Why do you think so?" His reply was: "Other men have been assassinated. . . . If it is to be done it is impossible to prevent it."<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Charnwood, "Abraham Lincoln," p. 448.

<sup>19</sup> Crook, "Through Five Administrations," pp. 66, 73.



## CHAPTER III

### LINCOLN AS AN ABSTAINER

Abraham Lincoln was a man of remarkable physical strength, and to the end of his life was capable of enduring tests that would crush most men.

"The sturdy constitution that Lincoln inherited from five generations of pioneers," says Arnold, one of his biographers, "was hardened by the toil and exposure to which, even more than most backwoods boys, he was subjected from early childhood."

One of the well authenticated stories of his great strength is directly connected with liquor. A friend, William G. Greene, made a wager that Lincoln could lift a cask holding forty gallons of whiskey high enough to drink out of the bunghole. It is said that "he squatted down and lifted the cask to his knees, rolling it over until his mouth was opposite the bung." His friend Greene cried out, "I have won my bet, but that is the first dram of whiskey I ever saw you swallow, Abe." "And I haven't swallowed that, you see," said Lincoln as he spurted out the liquor.<sup>1</sup> Commenting on this anecdote, Mr. Arnold writes:

In this final episode of the little story is to be found a clue, if not to the source of his extraordinary vigor,

<sup>1</sup> Whitney, "Life of Lincoln," p. 85.

at least to its continued preservation, unimpaired by the vices that have shorn so many Samsons of their strength. . . . He grew up strong in body, healthful in mind, with no bad habits, no stain of intemperance, profanity or vice. He used neither tobacco nor intoxicating drinks, and thus living he grew to be six feet four inches high and a giant in strength.<sup>2</sup>

So remarkable were Lincoln's feats of strength in wrestling, lifting heavy weights, chopping down trees and splitting rails, that he has been called a "Samson of the backwoods." He had the strength of a giant, united with all the signs of a physical health that would have carried him to a great age. His freedom from every form of vice was in entire harmony with the advanced ethical ideas of our day.

In the time of his young manhood the great men that Lincoln specially admired were Clay and Webster, and both of these were excessive drinkers. Stephen A. Douglas, his longtime political opponent, was a remarkable man, but in marked contrast to Lincoln in personal habits as well as in moral ideals. Horace White says of Douglas: "Although patriotic beyond a doubt, he was color-blind to moral principles in politics and stone-blind to the evils of slavery."<sup>3</sup> Douglas was also so given to drink that he was unable to fill a number of public engagements because of his drunken condition; and the last days of his life were filled with excessive drinking.

<sup>2</sup> Arnold, "Life of Abraham Lincoln," p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> Horace White's pamphlet, "Lincoln in 1854."

The incident related by Mr. Greene occurred long before the modern discovery that alcohol was not a stimulant but a poison, and that instead of being a help to strength it is a source of weakness. Lincoln's antagonism to drink seems to have been instinctive. There are also traditions that his mother warned her boy of the dangers of drink and made him promise to be an abstainer.

Herndon says:

New Salem was what in the modern parlance of large cities would be called a fast place, and it was difficult for a young man of ordinary moral courage to resist the temptations that beset him on every hand. It remains a matter of surprise that Lincoln was able to retain his popularity with the hosts of young men of his own age and still not join them in their drinking bouts and carousals. One of his companions said, "I am certain that he never drank any intoxicating liquors; he did not even, in those days, smoke or chew tobacco."<sup>4</sup>

As to life in New Salem, Lord Charnwood has this to say:

It never got much beyond a population of one hundred, and, like many similar little towns of the West, it has long since perished from the earth. But it was a busy place for awhile, and, contrary to what its name might suggest, it aspired to be rather fast. It was a cock-fighting and whiskey-drinking society into which Lincoln was launched. He managed to combine strict abstinence from liquor with keen participation in all its other diversions.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Herndon and Weik, p. 108.

<sup>5</sup> Lord Charnwood, "Abraham Lincoln," p. 63.

Lincoln stated many times that he never drank liquor, and his own repeated declaration ought to have long ago silenced the charges of the champions of alcoholic beverages.

Because the liquor dealers' associations continue, however, to circulate these slanders, it is necessary to repeat the record of the actual facts. Wherever there is a saloon contest, posters and circulars are issued by the advocates of alcohol claiming that Lincoln used liquor as a beverage. Some years ago a man declared that he had been on intimate terms of friendship with Lincoln and that repeatedly they drank whiskey together. The interview in which this declaration was made was widely published in the newspapers. In order to establish either the truth or falsity of the statement, letters of inquiry were written to the only survivor of Lincoln's family,—his son, Robert T. Lincoln,—and to his secretaries and biographers, Hay and Nicolay. Their replies, in possession of the author, are as follows:

(*Private*)

4 DEC., '94,  
THE TEMPLE, CHICAGO.

MY DEAR SIR:

Assuming that you will make no publication of my reply to your inquiry, for I never deny a newspaper statement publicly, it gives me pleasure to let you know that my father seemed to be absolutely devoid of the taste which is gratified by wine or liquor of any kind. I have seen him several times take a sip of wine at table, but if he ever did anything more I do not know it. He



simply cared nothing for it. Never heard him speak of the matter in any way.

Very truly yours,

ROBERT T. LINCOLN.

WESTERN RESERVE BUILDING,  
CLEVELAND, OHIO.

Nov. 24, 1894.

DEAR SIR:

Mr. Lincoln was a man of extremely temperate habits. He made no use of either whiskey or tobacco during all the years that I knew him.

Yours very truly,

JOHN HAY.

WASHINGTON, D. C.,

Nov. 24, 1894.

MY DEAR SIR:

In reply to your inquiry whether Abraham Lincoln was "in the habit of drinking whiskey" I answer that during all the nearly five years of my service as his private secretary I never saw him take a drink of whiskey, and never knew or heard of his taking one. The story of his "being in the habit of drinking whiskey and somewhat accomplished in that line" is a pure fabrication.

Allow me also to refer you to Mr. Lincoln's "Address before the Springfield Washingtonian Temperance Society," February 22, 1842, printed in full on pages 57 to 64 in Volume I of our "Abraham Lincoln—Complete Works."

Yours truly,

JNO. G. NICOLAY.

Another of Lincoln's secretaries, William O. Stoddard, still living at this writing, writes from Madison,

New Jersey, June 30, 1917, in reply to a letter of inquiry:

You have somewhat surprised me. I did not know that at this late day there was any question of controversy as to the lifelong conduct and position of Abraham Lincoln on the temperance question.

Robert T. Lincoln's letter is marked "Private," but in a later note, dated June 30, 1915, he says: "I have no objection to your printing the letter I wrote to you on December 4, 1894." It will be noticed that in that letter he wrote: "I have seen him several times take a sip of wine at the table, but if he ever did anything more I do not know it." It is evident that Lincoln himself did not regard this taking a sip of wine as violating the spirit of his repeated pledges of total abstinence.

In addition to the pledge he took and urged upon others of the Washingtonian Society, there is the following pledge of total abstinence given by him on January 19, 1838, in connection with the Sangamon Temperance Society:

The members of this society agree not to use intoxicating liquor or provide it as an article of refreshment for their friends nor for persons in their employment, nor will they use, manufacture, or traffic in the same except for chemical, mechanical, medicinal, and sacramental purposes.

Mr. Lincoln added to his pledge: "specially never to drink ardent spirits."

It is interesting to note that Lincoln was not a member of any fraternal organization, except those relating to temperance. He was a member of the Sons of Temperance. The pledge of this order was as follows:

I will neither make, buy, sell nor use as a beverage any spirituous or malt liquors, wine, or cider.

Leonard Swett, an intimate personal friend of Lincoln's, says of him:

Not more than a year before he was elected President he told me that he had never tasted liquor in his life. "What?" I said, "do you mean to say you never tasted it?" "Yes, I never tasted it."

Shelby M. Cullom, also an intimate friend of Lincoln's, who lived in Springfield most of his life, and who served his State as Governor and for several terms as United States Senator, said, in contradiction of the report that Lincoln drank:

Lincoln never drank, smoked, or chewed tobacco, or swore. He was a man of the most simple habits. I recall distinctly when a committee of Springfield citizens, including myself, called at Lincoln's house, after he was nominated for President, to talk over with him the arrangements for receiving the committee on notification. Lincoln said: "Boys, I never had a drop of liquor in my whole life, and I don't want to begin now."<sup>6</sup>

Concerning the historic occasion when Lincoln received official notice of his nomination for the Presi-

<sup>6</sup> Chicago *Record-Herald*, March 16, 1908.

dency by the Chicago convention, we have a great variety of testimony, differing in some minor points, but all agreeing in the fact that he declined to provide liquors for the entertainment of the committee. Carpenter, who painted the picture of Lincoln and his cabinet, gives the following report of what took place at the meeting:

After the ceremony had passed [the notification and Lincoln's reply], Mr. Lincoln remarked to the company that as an appropriate conclusion to an interview so important and interesting as that which had just transpired, he supposed good manners would require that he should treat the committee with something to drink, and, opening a door that led into a room in the rear, he called out, "Mary! Mary!" A girl replied to the call, to whom Mr. Lincoln spoke a few words in an undertone, and, closing the door, he returned again to converse with his guests. In a few minutes the maid entered, bearing several glass tumblers and a large pitcher in the midst, and placed them upon the center-table. Mr. Lincoln arose, and, gravely addressing the company, said: "Gentlemen, we must pledge our mutual healths in the most healthy beverage which God has given to men. It is the only beverage I have ever used or allowed in my family, and I cannot consistently depart from it on the present occasion. It is pure Adam's ale from the spring." And, taking the tumbler, he touched it to his lips and pledged them his highest respects in a cup of cold water. Of course all his guests were constrained to admire his consistency and to join in his example.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> "Six Months in the White House," p. 125.

Charles Carleton Coffin, who was present at the ceremony, says that after responding to the formal notification, Lincoln said:

Mrs. Lincoln will be pleased to see you, gentlemen. You will find her in the other room. You must be thirsty after your long ride. You will find a pitcher of water in the library.

Entering the library, they found "a plain table with writing-materials upon it, a pitcher of cold water and glasses, but no wines or liquors." Mr. Coffin also reports that a citizen of Springfield told him that several citizens called on Mr. Lincoln and suggested to him that some entertainment should be provided, offering at the same time to supply the needful liquors. Mr. Lincoln replied:

Gentlemen, I thank you for your kind intentions, but must respectfully decline your offer. I have no liquor in my house and have never been in the habit of entertaining my friends in that way. I cannot permit my friends to do for me what I will not myself do. I shall provide cold water—nothing else.<sup>8</sup>

Lincoln's letter to J. Mason Haight, of California, who made inquiry about the serving of liquors, is clear and conclusive. Shortly after Mr. Lincoln's formal notification, as above recited, Mr. Haight wrote Lincoln a letter wishing to know whether liquors were or were not served on that occasion. In reply he received the following:

<sup>8</sup> Charles Carleton Coffin, "Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln," p. 174.

Private and Confidential.

SPRINGFIELD, ILL., JUNE 11, 1860.

J. MASON HAIGHT, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR:

I think it would be improper for me to write or say anything to or for the public, upon the subject of which you inquire. I therefore wish the little I do write to be held as strictly confidential. Having kept house sixteen years and having never held the cup to the lips of my friends there, my judgment was that I should not, in my new position, change my habit in this respect. What actually occurred upon the occasion of the committee visiting me I think it would be better for others to say.

Yours respectfully,

A LINCOLN.

Lieutenant-Governor Koerner, a noted enemy of prohibition, but a friend of Lincoln, was at the notification meeting. His reference to the absence of liquor is rather amusing. He said: "Ice water, it being a very hot evening, was the only refreshment served." <sup>9</sup>

Robert J. Halle, editor of the liquor paper, *Champion of Fair Play*, makes special criticism of John Hay's letter of November 24, 1894, and questions its genuineness, saying:

The letter is most cunningly worded, and, even if genuine, is very inconclusive; the letter is undated and the name of the person to whom it is supposed to have been sent carefully omitted; it makes reference to only *one* kind of alcoholic beverage, viz., whiskey.

<sup>9</sup> "Life of Koerner," Vol. II, p. 94.

Mr. Halle asks why the name of only one liquor is mentioned, and concludes: "The natural inference is that Lincoln drank some of the other kinds, to his private secretary's knowledge."

In the letter to Mr. Hay, to which he replied, he was asked explicitly about the claim of the man who said Mr. Lincoln "drank whiskey." The facsimile of Mr. Hay's letter has been widely published, and no one familiar with his handwriting ever challenged the genuineness of the document.

The most pitiful attempt the liquor men have made to try to prove that Lincoln used liquor as a beverage is their publication in fac-simile of a page in the ledger of the Springfield drugstore of Corneau & Diller, which shows that during a number of months several charges were made for brandy.<sup>10</sup> R. W. Diller, who was one of Lincoln's intimate friends, denounced with indignation the stories that Lincoln drank.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Robert J. Halle, the editor of the Chicago Liquor paper, *The Champion of Fair Play*, is the author of a pamphlet entitled "Lincoln and the Liquor Question," published by the Literary Bureau of the National Liquor League of America. It repeats all the stories and rumors as to Lincoln's being a saloon-keeper and a liquor drinker, gives a picture of the building "in which Lincoln kept a saloon," a facsimile of the so-called saloon license, and the drug store account of Corneau & Diller.

Mr. Halle also quotes three times the statement that Lincoln declared the injury done by liquor "did not arise from the use of a bad thing, but the abuse of a very good thing." This is a perversion of Lincoln's words. He was speaking of public opinion on the use of liquor, and it was acknowledged many were greatly injured by it, "but none seemed to think that the injury arose from the use of a bad thing, but from the abuse of a very good thing." He is stating the popular opinion on the subject; and to say he declared that "liquor was a good thing," as his personal opinion, is untrue.

<sup>11</sup> I. R. Diller, Letter.

There are a number of well authenticated incidents which illustrate Lincoln's habits of abstinence. Mr. Herndon relates that Lincoln told many times the following story:

He was traveling in a stage coach, the only other passenger being a Kentuckian, who offered him a chew of tobacco and was answered:

"No, I thank you, I never chew."

Later on the fellow-traveler offered a cigar, which was also politely declined, on the ground that he never smoked. As the coach stopped at the station to change horses, the Kentuckian poured out a cup of brandy and said:

"Stranger, seeing you do not smoke or chew, perhaps you will take a little of this fine French brandy. It's a fine article and a good appetizer."

This last best evidence of hospitality was also declined by Lincoln; and when the two separated the man said:

"Stranger, you are a clever but strange companion. I may never see you again, and don't want to offend you, but my experience has taught me that a man who has no vices has blamed few virtues."<sup>12</sup>

The stories of Lincoln's drinking are all traceable to unreliable sources. As an illustration, there was published in a Chicago paper in 1908 the following:

L. White Busbey, secretary to Speaker Cannon, said that he recalled that an old citizen of Illinois once told

<sup>12</sup> Herndon and Weik, Vol. I, p. 392.

A revised version of the story gives these as the questions: "Stranger, do you masticate,—do you fumigate,—do you irrigate?"



him that Lincoln sold whiskey when he was a country storekeeper. "This old man lived in the town where Lincoln kept store and Stephen A. Douglas taught school," said Mr. Busbey. "He told me that at the end of every school term Lincoln had a slate full of credits against Douglas. The barrel was empty and Lincoln was broke."

In the Lincoln-Douglas debates Douglas referred to Lincoln as a former grocery-storekeeper. Lincoln replied:

"Yes, I was selling goods behind the counter, and Mr. Douglas was drinking before it."

This passage-at-arms as to selling and buying comprised the only pleasantries of the debate. History proves that Lincoln and Douglas never met until 1834, and then at Vandalia. Lincoln was then a member of the Legislature, while Douglas, who was four years Lincoln's junior, was a candidate for State's Attorney. The New Salem store had "winked out" long before that meeting.

One of the oldest and most intimate friends of Lincoln was Dr. William Jayne, of Springfield. His sister became the wife of Senator Lyman Trumbull, and was the bridesmaid at the Lincoln wedding. Dr. Jayne was the first Governor of the Territory of Dakota by the appointment of President Lincoln. Paul Selby, a pioneer editor and friend of Lincoln, said in 1908 that Dr. Jayne was one of the few persons then living "who knew Lincoln intimately and were accustomed to meet him almost daily in private life and frequently enjoyed the hospitality of his home."

In a letter to Mr. Selby, Dr. Jayne made the following statement :

I first knew Mr. Lincoln more than seventy years ago—quite well after he came to Springfield in 1837. He boarded with William Butler (in 1859 to 1862 State Treasurer), the second house west of my father's home, from the time he came to Springfield until he married. My father first and I afterward were Butler's family physicians. I think I knew Mr. Lincoln as well as any man now living in our city except John W. Bunn, who politically knew Mr. Lincoln very intimately. I do not believe Lincoln ever drank wine or whiskey after he came to our city to live. What he may have done prior to coming to our city I do not know. He joined the Washingtonian Temperance Society, made a temperance speech on February 22, 1842, and I have a copy of that speech. Mr. Lincoln never served wine to any one in his home while he was in Springfield. What he may have done in the White House I do not know. I have dined with him in the White House, and certainly he had then no wine. My opinion is that he never drank any spirits in youth. Of his early years, of course, I cannot speak with knowledge.

In an interview Dr. Jayne said further :

One could with safety wager any sum that no man in Springfield ever saw Lincoln take a drink. When the committee came to notify him of his nomination, a friend sent him a quantity of liquor, but he refused to serve it himself or to permit Mrs. Lincoln to do so. He said he never had offered drink to any one and he did not intend to begin then.

General John Cook was Colonel of the first regiment mustered into service from the State, the Seventh Illinois. He was appointed Brigadier General by President Lincoln for meritorious services at Fort Donelson. In a letter to Mr. Selby, General Cook says:

My acquaintance with Mr. Lincoln began about 1840, or a little before, and from that time until the assassination the friendship shown me never relaxed. The story of Mr. Lincoln's keeping bar or tending a saloon (called a grocery in early days) is purely bosh, and the assertion that he was addicted to the use of liquors of any description whatever is a dastardly calumny. I never knew him to take even a social drink with any one, and I never knew him to enter a saloon for any purpose. Without ostentation he was ever the champion of a total abstinence.

Speaking of a visit to Washington after Lincoln's first inauguration, during which time he was a guest at the White House for some three weeks, General Cook says:

I sat at the family table and on suitable occasions was permitted to be present at different functions. During all of such occasions, as has been the custom from time immemorial, wine was ever present, but on no occasion did I see Mr. Lincoln raise the glass to his lips.<sup>13</sup>

Stephen A. Douglas once attempted to ridicule Mr. Lincoln's abstaining habit and asked sneeringly:

"What! are you a temperance man?"

<sup>13</sup> Paul Selby, "Stories and Speeches of Abraham Lincoln."

"No," drawled Lincoln, with a smile, "I'm not a temperance man, but I'm temperate in this—I don't drink." <sup>14</sup>

General Horace Porter relates that at one time Lincoln came to City Point on a steamboat to visit General Grant, and, after giving his greetings and saying complimentary things about the hard work of the winter's siege, mentioned that he was not feeling well because he had been badly shaken up on the boat. A staff officer suggested:

"Let me send for a bottle of champagne for you, Mr. President; that's the best remedy I know of for seasickness."

"No, no, my young friend," replied the President, "I've seen many a man in my time seasick ashore from drinking that very article."

"That was the last time," General Porter adds, "that any one screwed up sufficient courage to offer him wine." <sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Frederick Trevor Hill, "Lincoln the Lawyer," p. 33.

<sup>15</sup> General Horace Porter, *Century Magazine*, October, 1885.

## CHAPTER IV

### LINCOLN AS A TEMPERANCE REFORMER

The name of Abraham Lincoln stands first and foremost in the story of the abolition of human slavery, and yet Lincoln was not, in a strict sense of the word, an abolitionist until he faced the question of emancipation as a war measure. He hated slavery because he believed it to be cruel and unjust. "If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong," were his words. According to Herndon, Lincoln looked upon slavery, temperance, and universal suffrage as the great questions of moral and social reform, and early made this declaration.

"All such questions," he observed one day to Herndon, as they were discussing temperance in their office, "must first find lodgment with the most enlightened souls who stamp them with their approval. In God's own time they will be organized into law, and thus woven into the fabric of our institutions."<sup>1</sup>

Heretofore there has been no general recognition of Lincoln's notable relation to temperance reform. The facts are, however, that he not only gave his personal example by lifelong abstinence, but he also identified himself actively with the first widespread popu-

<sup>1</sup> Herndon and Weik, p. 158.

lar movement to advance the temperance cause. In the Washingtonian movement he not only gave his public example by taking the pledge, but he made a personal canvass, spoke on many occasions, and as a climax he delivered in behalf of the reform a great address, which is a classic.

It must be remembered that most of Lincoln's temperance speeches were delivered in obscure places before he became a man of prominence and when his views upon public questions were not regarded as of special value.

The temperance reformation of which the modern movement is a continuance began in an effective and organized way in 1825.<sup>2</sup> At the close of the Revolution the evils of intemperance were greatly increased. The one name to be specially honored in the awakening of the American people is that of Dr. Benjamin Rush of Philadelphia. He was the most distinguished physician of the country, and had also a large place in connection with the independence of the Colonies. As a member of the Continental Congress of 1776 he was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence and a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1787. He was a leading advocate of free schools and of the education of women, and was one of the founders of the first anti-slavery society, organized in 1775.

This distinguished American, holding medals and honors from European sources and recognized as a leader in humanitarian movements, published in 1785

<sup>2</sup> "Temperance Progress," Wooley and Johnson, p. 56.

his "Inquiry into the Effects of Ardent Spirits on the Human Body and Mind." It was a remarkable document and gives forcible statements of the evils of drink that are still effective. His arguments, however, were against distilled liquors.

In 1811, Dr. Rush presented to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, convened in Philadelphia, a thousand copies of his essay and made an earnest appeal for some action by the Assembly. As a result, a committee was appointed that in 1812 reported strongly against intemperance, yet did not declare for total abstinence. Committees of conference with other denominations were appointed, and during that year action was taken by the Methodist and Congregational Churches, which marked the beginning of the persistent work of the churches against intemperance.

In 1825 the Reverend Lyman Beecher preached his six sermons on the "Nature, Occasions, Signs, Evils, and Remedy of Intemperance." The publication of these sermons, which were translated into several languages and widely circulated among other nations, was considered the greatest influence in creating a distinct sentiment against not only the use of liquor but also the traffic itself.<sup>3</sup>

In 1826 The American Society for the Promotion of Temperance was formed. This was the beginning of a new era, in that the declaration was made that the only practical and effective remedy for intemperance was total abstinence. In the church of Rev.

<sup>3</sup> "Sermons," Lyman Beecher.

Albert Barnes at Morristown there was a society that pledged its members not to drink more than a pint of applejack a day as against the usual allowance of a quart.

In 1836 the American Temperance Union was organized at a convention in Saratoga and took the advanced step of extending to all intoxicating liquors the principle of total abstinence.

The next important advance in temperance reform was the Washingtonian movement, beginning in 1840. Later, in 1849, Father Mathew, the great Irish apostle of temperance, visited the United States, held great meetings in all parts of the country, and administered the pledge to some 600,000 people. Then followed the organization of the temperance fraternal societies, to preserve the fruits of the previous agitations. The first of these was the Sons of Temperance, organized in 1842, followed by the Good Templars in 1851. The Congressional Temperance total abstinence society was formed in 1842, and added much prestige to the movement.

The first prohibitory law was passed in Maine in 1846. The liquor men made an effort to have all restrictive measures as to the sale of liquor removed. Suits were carried to the United States Supreme Court from several States. The argument for this appeal was made by Daniel Webster and Rufus Choate. In handing down his decision on the case, in 1847, Chief Justice Taney, noted for his Dred Scott pro-slavery decision, said:



If any State deems the retail and internal traffic in ardent spirits injurious to its citizens and calculated to produce illness, vice, and debauchery, I see nothing in the Constitution of the United States to prevent it from regulating and restraining the traffic or from prohibiting it altogether if it thinks proper.

The National Temperance Society and Publication House was founded in 1865, and for many years led the temperance movements of the country. In 1874 was organized the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, the largest and in many ways the most powerful organization in behalf of temperance reform. In later days came the pledge-signing total abstinence crusades, the organization of church boards and societies, the Prohibition Political Party, and the great Anti-Saloon League. One of the important results of all these movements is that at this time (1918) twenty States have voted to ratify the prohibition amendment to the Constitution.

In the days of Lincoln's special activity in temperance work intense interest on the slavery question crowded out other reforms. It is apparent, however, that the temperance reform was a close second in Lincoln's heart to abolition. It may be that the delay of the triumph over alcohol required the time of the last half-century, because it was needful to add to the moral sentiment against drink the powerful arguments of science, of physical and mental efficiency, and the coming together of social influences.

The Washingtonian Society was founded in the barroom of a Baltimore hotel in 1840 by six members of a drinking club. One of these was by vocation a tailor, another a carpenter, while there were two blacksmiths, a coachmaker, and a silversmith. Rev. Matthew Hale Smith was then making temperance addresses in the city, and some members of the club were sent to hear one of his lectures and report. In giving the account, one said that temperance was all right. The tavern-keeper, who was a listener, insisted that the temperance people were hypocrites. This provoked the reply:

"It is to your interest to cry them down."

It was finally proposed to form a society, the following pledge being prepared and signed:

We, whose names are annexed, desirous of forming a society for our mutual benefit and to guard against a practice—a pernicious practice—which is injurious to our health, standing, and families, do pledge ourselves as gentlemen that we will not drink any spirits or malt liquors, wine, or cider.

In a few months they had seven hundred members. John H. W. Hawkins, who had been a confirmed drunkard, became their leader and a powerful advocate of the cause. He ultimately carried the crusade to almost every State in the Union, making two visits to Springfield, Illinois.

Dr. Theodore L. Cuyler says in his account of the pioneer leaders of the temperance cause:

The greatest single result of this movement was the conversion of John B. Gough from an obscure and wretched young sot into the most brilliant, popular and effective advocate of our cause that the world has yet seen.

Dr. Cuyler says further :

The last name I record is the most illustrious of them all—the name of him who in early life defended the principles of total abstinence and who closed his glorious career by binding up the Union and by unbinding the manacles of the slave—the name of our country's best beloved, Abraham Lincoln.<sup>4</sup>

The Washingtonian movement swept over the country like wildfire. Popular meetings were held in school-houses, halls, and churches. Many of the speakers were reformed drunkards who had taken the pledge and related their experiences.

The experience of John B. Gough, as related by himself in his "Autobiography," may illustrate the methods of the meetings. Gough had gone to the lowest depth of poverty and wretchedness, and when he was in despair and ready for suicide he was invited to one of the meetings by Joel Stratton, a waiter. This is his own account :

When I stood up to relate my story, I recognized my acquaintance who asked me to sign. He greeted me with a smile of approbation which nerved and strengthened

<sup>4</sup> Cuyler, "Temperance in All Nations," Vol. 1, p. 21.

me for my task as I tremblingly observed every eye fixed upon me. I lifted my quivering hand and then and there told what rum had done for me. I related that I had once been respectable and happy and had a home, but that now I was a homeless, miserable, scathed, diseased, and blighted outcast from society. I said scarce a hope remained to me of ever becoming that which I once was, but, having promised to sign the pledge, I had determined not to break my word and would now affix my name to it. In my palsied hand I with difficulty grasped the pen, and in characters almost as crooked as those of old Stephen Hopkins on the Declaration of Independence I signed the total abstinence pledge and resolved to free myself from the inexorable tyrant Rum.<sup>5</sup>

Dickens' first visit to America was in 1842, the year when the Washingtonian movement was at its height and the year in which Lincoln delivered his notable address on Washington's birthday. We find records of Dickens' journeys across the country in coaches. In one hotel he ate with the boarders, and they had no drink but tea and coffee.

I ask for brandy, but it is a temperance hotel and spirits are not to be had for love or money.

On visiting the Military Academy at West Point, he writes of the hotel that "it had the drawback of being a total abstinence house," as wines and liquors were forbidden to the cadets.

On his visit to Cincinnati he wrote of a great tem-

<sup>5</sup> "Autobiography of John B. Gough," p. 131.

perance convention held there on the day after his arrival, the parade passing the hotel in which he lodged:

It comprised several thousand men, the members of various Washingtonian auxiliary temperance societies, and was marshaled by officers on horseback who cantered briskly up and down the line with scarfs and ribbons of bright colors fluttering out behind them gaily. . . . I was particularly pleased to see the Irishmen who formed a distinct society among themselves, and mustered very strong with their green scarfs—carrying their national Harp and their portrait of Father Mathew high above their heads. They looked as jolly and good-humored as ever, and working here the hardest for their living and doing any kind of sturdy labor that came in their way, were the most independent fellows there, I thought.

The banners were very well painted and flaunted down the street famously. There was the smiting of the rock, the gushing forth of the waters; and there a temperate man with "considerable of a hatchet" (as the standard bearer would probably have said) aiming a deadly blow at a serpent which was apparently about to spring upon him from the top of a barrel of spirits. But the chief feature of this part of the show was a huge allegorical device, borne among the ship-carpenters, on one side whereof the steamboat Alcohol was represented bursting her boiler and exploding with a great crash, while upon the other, the good ship Temperance sailed away with a fair wind to the hearts' content of the Captain, crew and passengers.

Dickens also writes of the temperance songs of the children of the free schools, and the speeches adapted to the occasion, "but the main thing was the conduct

and appearance of the audience throughout the day, and that was admirable and full of promise.”<sup>6</sup>

An examination of the newspaper files of that time shows that little space was given to reports of meetings or speeches unless they were related to immediate political events; but it is known that Lincoln became interested in the Washingtonian movement and made many speeches in Springfield and throughout the adjoining country, advocating total abstinence and the signing of the pledge.

Roland Diller, a longtime resident of Springfield, was an intimate personal friend of Lincoln from 1844 to the end of his life. His drugstore was not far from the Lincoln home and was one of the favorite haunts of Lincoln and a number of his friends, who frequently gathered there to tell stories and discuss politics.<sup>7</sup>

Dr. Howard Russell, founder of the Anti-Saloon League, was in Springfield early in 1900 and visited Mr. Diller, to look at some relics of the great President. He said that he was specially interested in temperance work; whereupon the old druggist told him that Lincoln was a pronounced temperance man and

<sup>6</sup>Dickens, "American Notes," p. 173; Nelson and Sons.

<sup>7</sup>Letter of Isaac R. Diller: "I never saw my father so righteously indignant as when he read the statement by some newspaper man that while Lincoln was in the White House he saw him pour out four fingers of whiskey in a glass and drink it off with relish. Father said it was as black a lie as was ever uttered. He said Mr. Lincoln never drank with the other men who used to gather in the store and did much drinking. If he drank at all there would have been no secrecy about it with those friends and associates who used it without any attempt at hiding what they did."

not only never used intoxicating liquor of any kind but was also an earnest advocate of the reform. Mr. Diller further told Dr. Russell that there were still living people who had attended the Washingtonian meetings at which Lincoln spoke and who had taken the pledge as given by Mr. Lincoln.

Some months after this, by arrangement of Mr. Diller, Dr. Russell met Cleopas Breckenridge, a farmer of Sangamon County and a reputable citizen of high standing, who had served in the Civil War as a sergeant in Company D of the Thirty-third Illinois Volunteer Infantry.<sup>8</sup> Mr. Breckenridge remembered that in the summer of either 1846 or 1847 he had attended a temperance meeting in the neighborhood school-house, at which Lincoln made the address and gave the pledge of total abstinence.

Lincoln had already gained a reputation as a public speaker and as a rising young lawyer, and the notice of his coming, said Breckenridge, drew a large crowd. Lincoln made an earnest plea for total abstinence. When he had finished his address he took from his pocket a paper and said:

"This is what is called the 'Washingtonian Pledge.' Many thousands of people throughout the country have signed it. I have signed this pledge myself and would be glad to have as many of my neighbors as are willing sign it with me."

Many signed it, including Breckenridge, who was then ten years old. Lincoln kindly urged him to take the pledge, and when the boy had given his name, said

<sup>8</sup> "Lincoln Legion," Banks, p. 30.

to him: "You keep that pledge, and it will be the best act of your life."

Breckenridge said he had always felt under a solemn obligation to keep the pledge Lincoln had given him, and under many temptations in the war and amid other surroundings had never broken it, counting it an essential element in a successful life.

Breckenridge further gave Dr. Russell the names of others still living who had taken the pledge at the hands of Lincoln at this meeting at South Fork school-house in 1847. Two of them, R. E. Berry and Moses Martin, gave accounts similar to that rendered by Breckenridge, and all three of the men made their affidavits to the facts as stated by them.

One of these men reproduced the following pledge as given by Lincoln:

Whereas, the use of alcoholic liquors as a beverage is productive of pauperism, degradation, and crime; and believing it is our duty to discourage that which produces more evil than good, we therefore pledge ourselves to abstain from the use of intoxicating liquors as a beverage.



## CHAPTER V

### LINCOLN AND PROHIBITION

The most distinguishing relation of Abraham Lincoln to the temperance reform was on the side of moral suasion, especially as it was exemplified in the Washingtonian movement. He had other relations to the traffic which he expressed directly and indirectly a number of times.

The liquor advocates have given extensive publicity to Lincoln's vote in the Illinois legislature of 1840 on "An act to regulate tavern and grocery licenses." In the House Journal of December 19, 1840, it is recorded that Mr. Murphy, of Chicago, moved to strike out all after the enacting clause and to insert the following:

That after the passage of this act no person shall be licensed to sell vinous or spirituous liquors in this State and that any person who violates this act by selling such liquors shall be fined in the sum of one thousand dollars, to be recovered before any court having competent jurisdiction.

It was an apparent effort by a friend of the liquor business to make the bill an object of ridicule. Lincoln moved to lay the Murphy amendment on the table, and this was carried by a vote of seventy-five

Yeas to eight Nays. This action has been widely paraded as evidence that Mr. Lincoln voted against prohibition. ;

In 1855 a prohibitory law was submitted to the voters of Illinois and was defeated. Herndon, Lincoln's law partner, was an ardent advocate of prohibition. Joseph Fort Newton says:

Lincoln, neither prohibitionist nor abolitionist, held aloof, not wishing to divert attention from the supreme question of the age, but Herndon plunged into the thick of the fight, writing and speaking with all the more zeal because liquor was his personal enemy.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Lincoln may have been politically neither prohibitionist nor abolitionist, but we know that he hated slavery, and there is every evidence that he hated also the liquor traffic. Just as he became the Great Emancipator when the right time came, so he would have welcomed the day, if it might have come to him, to sign a bill forbidding forever the traffic in alcoholic liquor.

Lord Charnwood says:

His social philosophy, as he expressed it to his friends in these days, was one which contemplated great future reforms—abolition of slavery and a strict temperance

<sup>1</sup> "Lincoln and Herndon," p. 77. Dr. Newton adds respecting this campaign: "No offices were at stake, and there was not a full vote, but the Germans turned out to a man—and, it was charged, almost to a woman and killed prohibition in Illinois for nearly a generation." *See also*, "Memoirs of Gustave Koerner," Vol. I, p. 620.

policy were among them. But he looked for them in a sort of fatalistic confidence in the ultimate victory of reason and saw no use and a good deal of harm in premature political agitation for them. He is reported to have said: "All such questions must find lodgment with the most enlightened souls who stamp them with their approval. In God's own time they will be organized into law and thus woven into the fabric of our institutions." This seems a little cold-blooded, but perhaps we can already begin to recognize the man who, when the time had fully come, would be on the right side, and in whom the evil which he had deeply but restrainedly hated would find an appallingly wary foe.<sup>2</sup>

There cannot be found in any speech or letter of Lincoln's a single word expressing the slightest sympathy with the licensed traffic in liquor. In his great address on Washington's birthday he said:

Whether or not the world would be vastly benefited by a total and final banishment from it of all intoxicating drinks, seems to me not now an open question. Three-fourths of mankind confirms the affirmative with their tongues, and I believe all the rest acknowledge it in their hearts.

He also said, speaking of the temperance revolution:

When the victory shall be complete—when there shall be neither a slave nor a drunkard on the earth—how proud the title of that land which may truly claim to be the birthplace and the cradle of both those revolutions

<sup>2</sup> Lord Charnwood, "Abraham Lincoln," p. 75.

that shall have ended in that victory. How nobly distinguished that people who shall have planted and nurtured to maturity both the political and moral freedom of their species.

When Lincoln refers to the "total and final banishment of all intoxicating drinks" he is plainly anticipating the wiping-out of the liquor traffic. If all men were abstainers there would be no reason for the existence of the traffic. If no intoxicating liquor were manufactured or sold no one would be induced to form the drink habit.

The friends of the liquor traffic have not only resorted to misrepresentations in their efforts to identify Mr. Lincoln with their business, but have even used forgery. In 1887, in Atlanta, Georgia, there was an exciting campaign to close the saloons. At that time the Negroes were voting in Georgia, and it was shrewdly planned to use the name of Lincoln to capture their votes. Handbills were circulated, headed in large letters:

FOR LIBERTY! ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S PROCLAMATION.

Underneath this was a picture of a Negro kissing the hand of Lincoln, who was in the act of striking off his shackles, the Negro's family standing near by. Under the picture was printed this ostensible quotation:

Prohibition will work great injury to the cause of temperance. It is a species of intemperance within itself,

for it goes beyond the bounds of reason, in that it attempts to control a man's appetite by legislation, and in making crimes out of things that are not crimes. A prohibitory law strikes a blow at the very principles on which our government was founded. I have always been found laboring to protect the weaker classes from the stronger, and I can never give my consent to such a law as you propose to enact. Until my tongue be silenced in death, I will continue to fight for the rights of man.

Then followed this appeal:

Colored voter, he appeals to you to protect the liberty he has bestowed upon you. Will you go back on his advice? Look to your rights! Read and act! Vote for the sale!

A copy of this handbill was sent by the writer of these pages to Hay and Nicolay. A reply was received as follows from Hay:

Neither Mr. Nicolay nor I have ever come across this passage in Mr. Lincoln's works, which we have been several years compiling.

Mr. Nicolay, who spent years in gathering Lincoln's papers, speeches, and writings of every kind, said:

In all this vast collection there is nowhere any speech, letter or document, or reported conversation by him on the subject of prohibition.

In spite of these statements, this forged quotation continues to be used in wet-and-dry campaigns. A

letter of inquiry as to its origin was sent to the National Model License League, of which Colonel T. M. Gilmore is president, eliciting this reply:

As to the reported words of Abraham Lincoln beginning "Prohibition will work great evil to the cause of temperance," I beg leave to say that I can not at this time tell you where the original may be found.

In another letter he admits that after diligent search through numerous authorities he could find no evidence that Lincoln ever used such language.<sup>3</sup>

A prominent liquor journal says:

It may be impossible to prove conclusively that Lincoln used the exact words in the disputed sentence.

In 1853, Rev. James Smith in Springfield gave a lecture entitled, "A Discourse on the Bottle; Its Evils and the Remedy." On January 29th a request was made by those who heard it for the publication of the address, because its general circulation would help public sentiment, and Lincoln was one of the signers.

The wording of this request was:

The undersigned listened with great satisfaction to the discourse, on the subject of temperance, delivered by you on last evening, and believing that if published and circulated among the people it would be productive of good, we respectfully request a copy thereof for publication.

<sup>3</sup> Letters to David G. Robertson.

An extract from the address is as follows:

The liquor traffic is a cancer in society, eating out its vitals and threatening destruction; and all attempts to regulate the cancer will not only prove abortive but will aggravate the evil. No, there must be no more attempts to regulate the cancer; it must be eradicated; not a root must be left; for until this is done all classes must continue to be exposed to become victims of strong drink, and the woe in the text must abide upon us: "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, that putteth the bottle to him." The most effectual remedy would be the passage of a law altogether abolishing the liquor traffic, except for mechanical, chemical, medical, and sacramental purposes, and so framed that no principle of the constitution of the States or of the United States be violated.

After Lincoln had attained prominence as a lawyer he was in Clinton, attending court, and made a notable plea. A grogshop had badly demoralized a number of men, and their families had suffered. A company of women, anticipating the work of Carrie Nation and her hatchet, had made a raid on the infamous place, had broken the bottles and demijohns, and smashed the whiskey barrels and the furniture. They were arrested and prosecuted. It is said that the local attorneys feared the influence of the liquor men, but Lincoln *volunteered* his services in their defense.

The late Rev. Dr. D. D. Thompson, editor of the *Northwestern Christian Advocate*, published the following portion of Lincoln's plea:

May it please the court, I will say a few words in behalf of the women who are arraigned before your Honor and the jury. I would suggest, first, that there be a change in the indictment, so as to have it read, "The State against Mr. Whiskey," instead of "The State against the Women." It would be far more appropriate. Touching this question, there are three laws: First, the law of self-protection; second, the law of the statute; third, the law of God. The law of self-protection is the law of necessity, as shown when our fathers threw the tea into Boston harbor, and in asserting their right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. This is the defense of these women. The man who has persisted in selling whiskey has had no regard for their well-being or for the welfare of their husbands and sons. He has had no fear of God nor regard for man; neither has he had any regard for the laws of the statute. No jury can fix any damages or punishment for any violation of the moral law. The course pursued by this liquor-dealer has been for the demoralization of society. His groggery has been a nuisance. These women, finding all moral suasion of no avail with this fellow, oblivious to all tender appeals, alike regardless of their prayers and tears, in order to protect their households and promote the welfare of the community, united to suppress the nuisance. The good of society demanded its suppression. They accomplished what otherwise could not have been done.

Henry B. Rankin, in referring to this case, says:

In the midst of his powerful appeals to the jury in behalf of the women, and his attack upon the evils of the traffic and use of intoxicating spirits, the speaker turned, and, pointing his long, bony finger toward the venerable



Parson Berry, who was among those present, exclaimed: "There stands the man who years ago was instrumental in convincing me of the evils of trafficking in and using ardent spirits. I am glad I ever saw him. I am glad I ever heard and heeded his testimony on this terrible subject."<sup>4</sup>

Herndon says that at the close of his plea "Lincoln gave some of his own observations on the ruinous effects of whiskey in society and demanded its early suppression."

At the conclusion of Lincoln's speech, the court, without waiting for the verdict of the jury, dismissed the women, saying:

"Ladies, go home. I will require no bond of you, and if any fine is ever wanted of you we will let you know."

According to Herndon, this trial took place in 1855, which was the year in which a prohibition law was submitted to the voters of Illinois and was defeated.<sup>5</sup>

James B. Merwin, founder of *The American Journal of Education* and widely known as a writer and speaker on educational and literary subjects, was also among the early advocates of prohibition. He states that he and Lincoln campaigned together for prohibition in 1854 and 1855. "In that memorable canvass," he says: "Mr. Lincoln and myself spoke in Jacksonville, Bloomington, Decatur, Carlinville, Peoria and many other points." Richard Yates, afterwards Governor and United States Senator, presided at the Jack-

<sup>4</sup> "Personal Recollections," Henry B. Rankin, p. 80.

<sup>5</sup> Herndon and Weik, Vol. II, p. 12.

sonville meeting. In one of the early speeches Lincoln made, Merwin reports him as saying:

Is not the law of self-protection the first law of nature—the first primary law of civilized society? Law is for the protection, conservation and extension of right things and of right conduct, not for the protection of evil and wrongdoing.

The State must, in its legislative action, recognize, in the law enacted, this principle—it must make sure and secure these endeavors to establish, protect, and extend right conditions, right conduct, righteousness.

These conditions will be secured and preserved, not by indifference, not by a toleration of evils, not by attempting to throw around any evil the shield of law, never by any attempt to license the evil.

This sentiment of right conduct for the protection of home, of state, of church, of individuals, must be taken up, embodied in legislation, and thus become a positive factor active in the State. This is the most important function in the legislation of the modern State.

This saves the whole, and not a part, with a high, true conservatism through the united action of all, by all, for all.

The prohibition of the liquor traffic, except for medical and mechanical purposes, thus becomes the new evangel for the safety and redemption of the people from the social, political, and moral curse of the saloon and its inevitable evil consequences of drunkenness.

According to Merwin, Lincoln often said:

“The saloon and the liquor traffic have defenders, but no defense.”

The same authority also gives the following as the gist of Lincoln's speeches in the campaign:

This legalized liquor traffic as carried on in the saloons and grogshops is the tragedy of civilization. Good citizenship demands and requires that what is right should not only be made known, but be made prevalent; that what is evil should not only be detected and defeated, but destroyed.

The saloon has proved itself to be the greatest foe, the most blighting curse of our modern civilization, and this is why I am a practical prohibitionist.

We must not be satisfied until the public sentiment of this State and the individual conscience shall be instructed to look upon the saloonkeeper and the liquor-seller, with all the license can give him, as simply and only a privileged malefactor—a criminal.

Mr. Merwin is also authority for the statement that Lincoln, in advocating the entire prohibition of the liquor traffic, used nearly the same language and in many instances the same illustrations he used later in his arguments against slavery.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *The New Voice*, June 16, 1904.

James B. Merwin became acquainted with Lincoln in 1852. In 1855, he took an active part in the "Maine Law Campaign" in Illinois, as corresponding secretary of the committee in charge, of which Dr. N. S. Davis of Chicago was chairman. At the close of the campaign he was presented with a fine gold watch with this inscription:

"Presented by the friends of temperance in Chicago to J. B. Merwin, Cor. Sec. of the Maine Law Alliance of the State of Illinois, as a token of their confidence and regard for his untiring energy and perseverance in the campaign of 1855, for Prohibition."

Major Merwin said that Lincoln wrote the inscription and was a witness of the presentation.

In the Lincoln-Douglas debates Lincoln at one time said:

"If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong."

The fact that a thing was wrong was sufficient reason for Lincoln's opposition, and Mr. Merwin points out that in one of his speeches Lincoln said:

The real issue in this controversy, the one pressing upon every mind that gives the subject careful consideration, is that legalizing the manufacture, sale, and use of intoxicating beverage is a wrong—as all history and every development of the traffic proves it to be—a moral, social, and political wrong.

Lieutenant Governor Gustave Koerner, one of the leading Germans of Illinois, was the leader of the forces that defeated prohibition in the campaign of 1855. He was, however, a devoted friend of Lincoln

Early in the Civil War Major Merwin worked as a volunteer in the camps around Washington, making many addresses to the soldiers on questions of morals, and especially on temperance. His work had the hearty commendation of the then commander-in-chief, General Winfield Scott. On July 24, 1862, President Lincoln issued this order: "Surgeon General will send Mr. Merwin where he may think the public service will require." A number of the army officers, members of Congress and other prominent men heartily endorsed Mr. Merwin's army work. The notes of General Scott and President Lincoln have been preserved in facsimile. In the *Century Magazine* of June, 1917, Major Merwin had a Lincoln story, and the following statement was published in the editorial notes:

Major J. B. Merwin, veteran temperance worker, got to know Lincoln very well when they were both working in the temperance cause in Illinois during the years 1854-1855. From 1861 to 1865 Major Merwin was in Washington nearly all the time, engaged in temperance work among the soldiers. "In fact," he writes, "when I was in Washington, I slept on the top floor of the White House and came to know Lincoln about as well as any one could."

and ardently supported him in his nomination and election as President. It may be counted certain that if Lincoln had ever uttered any words against prohibition his friend and admirer would have used them in the campaign.

It is said that some of Mr. Lincoln's political followers were alarmed about his radicalism on the prohibition question and made an unsuccessful effort to silence him.

It is a fact that has escaped mention by the majority of Lincoln's biographers that the first newspaper nomination of Lincoln for President was in a journal that was noted as an advocate of temperance reform.

In a letter written by William O. Stoddard, one of Lincoln's secretaries, dated June 30, 1917, is this statement:

I wrote and printed the first editorial nomination of him for President. I sent out 200 extra copies to the press and it was widely copied and commented on. The *Central Illinois Gazette* (Champaign, Illinois), of which I was part owner and sole editor, was the only out-and-out aggressive temperance journal in all that region. We were bitterly assailed as "fanatics" but we kept our own place "dry."<sup>7</sup>

The first notice was under the title: "Our Next President." It appeared in the *Central Illinois Gazette* on May 4, 1859, and is republished by Whitney.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Personal letter to the author.

<sup>8</sup> "Life of Lincoln," p. 262.



## CHAPTER VI

### LINCOLN'S GREAT TEMPERANCE SPEECH

Abraham Lincoln's name is high in the list of the great orators of the world. His greatest speeches are identified with questions of moral and political reform. His plain, vigorous Anglo-Saxon style gave him note before his time of wider fame. The "Gettysburg Address" and the "Second Inaugural Address" are counted his masterpieces. His letter to Mrs. Bixby, expressing his sympathy to her as the mother of five sons who had died as soldiers in the Union Army, is hung in a great library at Oxford University as a model of English style.

Mr. Bryce, writing of the florid rhetoric so common in the oratory of Lincoln's time, says that Lincoln "escaped it entirely" and that "his example had much to do in changing the common practice to a new style whose notes were simplicity, directness, and breadth."<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Newton, discussing the influences upon young men in the law office of Lincoln and Herndon, says:

A new school of eloquence might have formed itself by the methods of Lincoln, depending for its results, not upon the subtlety of the rhetoric nor the magic of elocu-

<sup>1</sup> "Introduction to Speeches and Letters of Abraham Lincoln," James Bryce, p. 1.

tion, but claiming attention and assent by direct and honest appeals to the common understanding.<sup>2</sup>

Lincoln has so great a reputation as a story-teller that many have wondered why so few of his stories are to be found in his published addresses. In the course of the famous debates with Senator Douglas some of his friends did, indeed, urge him to introduce more of his witty illustrations and funny stories, and so get applause. Lincoln, however, replied:

"The occasion is too serious. I do not seek applause, or to amuse the people, but to convince them."

Biographers of Lincoln make special mention of three speeches: the one delivered by invitation of the Springfield Washingtonian Society, February 22, 1842; the "House Divided Against Itself," at Springfield, June 17, 1858; and the "Cooper Institute Address," February 27, 1860. In connection with all of these there is evidence that they were prepared with special care and regarded by Lincoln himself as his own productions of special value. The two later speeches had direct relation to his nomination and election as President.

The Washingtonian movement came to its climax in 1842, and the 22nd of February of that year was noted for the great temperance meetings held in all parts of the country. In many cities there were parades with music and banners. In Boston, Faneuil Hall was filled three times during the day with enthusiastic audiences.

<sup>2</sup> "Lincoln and Herndon," p. 255.



Dr. John Marsh described the celebration in New York in these words:

The grand festival at Center Market Hall on the birthday of our immortal Washington was got up and carried through in a style worthy of the movement with which it was connected. The magnitude of the halls, their appropriate decorations, the immense crowds of people, the eloquence of the orators, the beauty and rich supply of the table, the hearty congratulations of the guests, the pith of the sentiments and the power of the temperance odes sung by thousands of voices—these, gratifying as they were, did not fill our vision so much as the object of the festival and the character and circumstances of the many there, once poor, unfortunate drunkards, now disenthralled, reformed men gathered together with their happy families to rejoice in their wonderful deliverance; the whole forming an entirely new era in the moral history of our great city.<sup>3</sup>

Notable meetings were held in Washington City. The Congressional Temperance Society had been organized there in 1833, its object as announced being “by example and kind moral influence to discountenance the use of ardent spirits and the traffic in it throughout the community.” The pledge did not forbid the use of fermented and malt liquors, and it was found that this partial pledge did not prevent the fall of members of the society. Under the influence of the Washingtonian movement the society was reorganized in 1842 on the basis of total abstinence from all intoxicating liquors. Thomas Marshall, of Ken-

<sup>3</sup> “Life of John H. W. Hawkins,” p. 187.

tucky, a brilliant Congressman, himself a victim of drink, began a speech at the time of the reorganization of the society with these words:

The old Congressional Temperance Society has died of intemperance, holding the pledge in one hand and a champagne bottle in the other.

The whole country was so affected by the Washingtonian crusade that many enthusiastic friends of temperance believed their cause was about to triumph and that the liquor traffic was to be annihilated. In this year of 1842 the demand for whiskey was reduced one-half from that of the previous year, because of the reformation of the drinkers. Distilleries ran only on half-time.

Fashionable drinking, too, was becoming unfashionable. The *New York Mercantile Journal* made the statement:

At the great and splendid levee given on the occasion of his daughter's marriage, the President of the United States of America had not a drop of wine or other alcoholics furnished. Nothing but cold water was to be had, and on a wedding occasion, too. What a noble step! One which will draw to him thousands of hearts, warm and fresh, and will tell on the future destinies of the nation.

Many people thought the movement, founded on the law of love, would win the final battle against intemperance. At a great convention held in Boston in 1842, the following resolution was adopted:

RESOLVED, That the unparalleled success of the Washingtonian movement in reforming the drunkard and inducing the retailer to cease his unholy traffic affords conclusive evidence that moral suasion is the true and proper basis of action in the temperance cause; and that we, therefore, earnestly recommend to its friends not to compromise the high and commanding position it now occupies.

On the 22nd of February in the same year, at the request of the Springfield Washingtonian Society, Lincoln made his great address in the Second Presbyterian Church. It has become a classic in temperance reform.

Herndon writes:

Early in 1842 he entered into the Washingtonian movement organized to suppress the evils of intemperance. At the request of the Society he delivered an admirable address on Washington's birthday in the Presbyterian Church.<sup>4</sup>

Lamon says:

For many years Lincoln was an ardent agitator against the use of intoxicating beverages and made speeches far and near in favor of total abstinence. Some of them were printed, and of one of them he was not a little proud.<sup>5</sup>

Robert H. Browne says:

In those years of cheap whiskey, dwarfed lives and rum-rotted intellects, he heartily united with a company

<sup>4</sup> Herndon and Weik, p. 248.

<sup>5</sup> "Life of Lincoln," Lamon, p. 480.

of the brave and fearless men and women of the time in about the first crusading organization against the drinking, sure-killing rum habit—the Washingtonians, a famous temperance society that saved many a victim and accomplished wondrous good in its day. He was an organizer, and in visits to different places he organized and started several temperance societies.<sup>6</sup>

Mr. Browne also gives extracts from Lincoln's noted speech of 1842 as an illustration of his early prowess and zeal.

Dr. Newton says:

In 1842 Lincoln took part in the Washingtonian temperance crusade, making several speeches, one of which has come down to us. Comparing it with his former efforts, one discovers a marked advance in restraint of style, which became every year less decorative and more forthright, simple and thrusting; and the style was the man. Rarely has that difficult theme been treated in so calm, earnest, and judicious a manner with surer insight or a finer spirit. He was already dreaming, it would seem, of a time when there should be neither a slave nor a drunkard in the republic. But his address, so far from

<sup>6</sup> "Abraham Lincoln," Robert H. Browne, Vol. I, p. 281.

Mr. Browne also said: "In those days of 'hard cider' and many harder and stronger liquors, there was a deal of intemperance everywhere, and the country was full of drunkards, made so in part perhaps by abundant and low-priced liquor. It was a 'devil's broth' and was not only intoxicating and drove men mad drunk, but killed almost as surely as it brutalized the sense and soul of its victims. The land was filled with the wrecks and remnants of what had been talented, industrious, and promising men. . . . One of the pertinent reasons why Lincoln was so little understood in his day by the men with him and about him was because of the flagrant dissipation that was seen constantly all around him and in which he never participated."

finding favor, excited hostility, for, speaking out of his wide knowledge of men and the wise pity which such knowledge begets, he was led to say frankly that those who had never fallen into the toils of the vice had escaped more by lack of appetite than by any moral superiority, and that, taken as a class, drinking men would compare favorably in head and heart with any other class. This was as a red rag to the more intemperate of the temperance reformers, to whom drinking was a crime—a temper of mind to which Lincoln, as abstemious in habit as in speech, was averse. Indeed, his pre-eminent sanity in the midst of extremists was one of the chief attractions of his life.<sup>7</sup>

In more than one letter Lincoln has referred to this address in a way that showed he regarded it as worthy of special consideration. To his intimate friend Joshua F. Speed he wrote:

You will see by the last *Sangamon Journal* that I made a temperance speech on the 22nd of February, which I claim that Fanny and you shall head as an act of charity to me; for I cannot learn that anybody else has read it or is likely to. Fortunately, it is not very long, and I shall deem it a sufficient compliance with my request if one of you listens while the other reads it.<sup>8</sup>

Major-General George Edward Pickett, one of General Robert E. Lee's division commanders, and famous as the leader of the brilliant but disastrous charge

<sup>7</sup> "Lincoln and Herndon," p. 16. The story was first printed in the *Sangamon Journal*, and has since been reprinted several times.

<sup>8</sup> "Life of Lincoln," Whitney, "Letters," Vol. III, p. 181.

at Gettysburg, received his appointment to West Point through Lincoln's influence. In a letter written to the young cadet Lincoln said:

I have just told the folks here in Springfield on this 111th anniversary of the birth of him whose name, mightiest in the cause of civil liberty, still mightiest in the cause for moral reformation, we mention in solemn awe, in naked, deathless splendor, that the one victory we can ever call complete will be that one which proclaims that there is not one slave or one drunkard on the face of God's green earth. Recruit for this victory.<sup>9</sup>

In opening his Springfield temperance address Lincoln said that while the temperance cause had been in progress for twenty years it was "just now crowned with a degree of success hitherto unparalleled." The cause was "transformed from a cold, abstract theory to a living, breathing, active, and powerful chieftain, going forth 'conquering and to conquer.'" The liquor business he called a great adversary, whose citadels the chieftain is pictured as storming and dismantling and whose idolatrous temples are being deserted.

The new and splendid success of the Washingtonian movement Lincoln ascribed to rational causes, whereas, he pointed out, in previous attacks on the demon of intemperance the champions had not used the best tactics. Most of the champions had been preachers, lawyers, and hired agents, and their want of approachability to the victims of drink had been fatal to suc-

<sup>9</sup> *McClure's Magazine*, March, 1908.

cess. The new champion, he said, had been a victim of intemperance—one who

bursts the fetters that bound him and appears before his neighbors "clothed and in his right mind," a redeemed specimen of long-lost humanity, and stands up with tears of joy trembling in his eyes, to tell of the miseries he once endured, now to be endured no more forever; of his once naked and starving children now clad and fed comfortably; of a wife, long weighed down with woe, weeping, now restored to health, happiness, and renewed affection; and how easily it all is done once it is resolved to be done; however simple his language, there is a logic and eloquence in it that few with human feelings can resist.

This is a vivid description of what was constantly taking place in the Washingtonian meetings, where the principal speakers were the reformed drunkards. It may be that sometimes they dwelt too much on their previous degradation, with the purpose of making their reform the more striking.

As to the former advocates of liquor, Lincoln said that "too much denunciation against dram-sellers and dram-drinkers had been indulged in." He thought this impolitic and unjust, because the tendency of human nature was "to meet denunciation with denunciation, crimination with crimination, and anathema with anathema." In urging the policy of kindly persuasion he quoted the maxim that "a drop of honey catches more flies than a gallon of gall," and he asserted that "the kindly method of the Washingtonians to convince

and persuade their old companions was proving itself the best plan."

The denunciation method Lincoln pronounced unjust, because of the very widespread use of liquor for ages. Intoxicating liquor, he said, had, until a decade or two ago, been recognized by everybody and repudiated by nobody. "From the sideboard of the parson to the ragged pocket of the homeless loafer it was constantly found." Physicians even then prescribed it, governments provided it for their soldiers and sailors, and it was thought insufferable not to supply liquor for all forms of social occasions or public gatherings. It was everywhere a respectable article of merchandise, being bought and sold by reputable people like any of the real necessities of life. While "it was known and acknowledged that many were greatly injured by it, none seemed to think that the injury arose from the use of a bad thing, but from the abuse of a very good thing."

In this Washingtonian address at Springfield, Lincoln also said that another error of the old reformers was to assume that

all habitual drunkards were utterly incorrigible and therefore must be turned adrift and damned without remedy in order that the grace of temperance might abound to the temperate then and to all mankind some hundreds of years thereafter.

He challenged this position as "something so repugnant to humanity, so uncharitable, so cold-blooded



and feelingless that it never did nor ever can enlist the enthusiasm of a popular cause."

The benefits of this plan of reformation, he contended, were

too remote in point of time to warmly engage many in its behalf. Few can be induced to labor exclusively for posterity, and none will do it enthusiastically. Posterity has done nothing for us, and, theorize on it as we may, practically we shall do very little for it unless we are made to think we are, at the same time, doing something for ourselves.

He declared that it showed an ignorance of human nature

to ask or expect a whole community to rise up and labor for the temporal happiness of others after themselves shall be consigned to the dust.

Pleasures to be enjoyed or pains to be endured, he contended, were but little regarded even in our own cases and much less in the case of others. In this connection he gave the only anecdote in the whole speech:

"Better lay down the spade you're stealing, Paddy,—if you don't you will pay for it at the day of judgment." "By the powers, if you'll credit me so long, I'll take another jist."

The Washingtonians, he said, repudiated the system of consigning the habitual drunkard to hopeless

ruin, but labored for their present as well as future good.

They teach hope to all and despair to none. As applied to their cause they deny the doctrine of unpardonable sin. As in Christianity it is taught so in this they teach that

“While the lamp holds out to burn  
The vilest sinner may return.”

He contended that these men, even if unlearned, had been taught in the school of experience, and he insisted that

Those who have suffered by intemperance personally and have reformed are the most powerful and efficient instruments to push the reformation to ultimate success.

He then made an appeal to those who had not suffered personally from drink—to those who say, “What good can I do by signing the pledge? I never drink, even without signing.” His first appeal was that they should sign to give moral support to the man struggling with his acquired appetite who needs every helpful influence that can be thrown around him.

He referred to the power of fashion, showing how men's actions are influenced by the example of others, and urged that it be made unfashionable to withhold one's name from the temperance pledge.

To those who would say, “By joining a reformed drunkards' society we would acknowledge ourselves as drunkards” he made this powerful appeal:

Surely no Christians will adhere to this objection. If they believe, as they profess, that Omnipotence condescended to take on Himself the form of sinful men, as such to die an ignominious death for their sakes, surely they will not refuse submission to the infinitely lesser condescension for the temporal and perhaps eternal salvation of a large, erring and unfortunate class of their fellow creatures. Nor is the condescension very great.

Herndon, who attended the meeting, says that this statement gave offense to a number of people, some even charging Lincoln with infidelity. When he made his campaign for Congress against Peter Cartwright some portions of this speech were used against him to show that he was an unbeliever.

His slighting allusion, expressed in the address at the Presbyterian Church before the Washingtonian Temperance Society, February 22, four years before, to the insincerity of Christian people, was not forgotten.<sup>10</sup>

Alonzo Rothschild in the discussion of Lincoln's campaign for Congress, says:

The charges of impiety covertly made in former primary contests by Lincoln's own Whig associates were now publicly urged against him with the greater earnestness by his Democratic opponents. . . .

Lincoln's alleged irreligion slyly hinted, a duel that had been talked of but had never been fought, and an unpopular temperance address recently delivered were among the charges used against him.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Herndon and Weik, Vol. I, p. 259.

<sup>11</sup> Rothschild, "Honest Abe," p. 279.

H. B. Rankin records that Cartwright told him years afterward that he and his friends had been mistaken as to these charges. Mr. Rankin also gives an account of a speech that Cartwright made in connection with Lincoln's campaign for reelection. It was in New York, to a company of prominent New Yorkers whose consciences, in Cartwright's own words, "were choked with cotton and cankered with gold." The speaker denounced their disloyalty and said:

I stand here to-night to commend to you the Christian character, sterling integrity, and far-seeing capacity of the President of the United States, whose official acts you have in your blind money-madness so critically assailed to-night.<sup>12</sup>

Lincoln frequently quoted Scripture in his speeches. In the Springfield temperance address there are at least eight quotations or direct references to the Bible.

Referring to the prevalent idea that drunkards were inferior types, he said:

If we take habitual drunkards as a class their heads and hearts will bear an advantageous comparison with those of any other class.

And he adds:

What one of us but can call to mind some dear relative, more promising in youth than all his fellows, who has fallen a sacrifice to the rapacity of the demon of intemperance?

<sup>12</sup> H. B. Rankin, "Personal Recollections," p. 274.

Lincoln was evidently much moved by the powerful results of the Washingtonian reform. "If the relative grandeur of revolutions shall be estimated by the great amount of human misery they alleviate, and the small amount they inflict, then indeed will this be the grandest the world shall ever have seen." He compared the movement with the political revolution of 1776, which had brought so much political freedom, and in which the world had "found a solution of that long-mooted problem as to the capability of man to govern himself." While that was glorious, there were mixed with it evils of war, famine, "the orphan's cry, the widow's wail," as part of the price paid for its blessings. "Turn now to the temperance revolution. In it we shall find a stronger bondage broken, a viler slavery manumitted, a greater tyrant deposed. In it more of want supplied, more disease healed, more sorrow assuaged. By it no orphans starving, no widows weeping." He also called the temperance reformation a noble ally to the cause of political freedom. He saw, too, with prophetic eye, the future that seems now to be dawning:

Even the dram-maker and the dram-seller will have glided into other occupations so gradually as never to have felt the shock of change, and will stand ready to join all others in the universal song of gladness.

When we remember that this speech was made more than three-quarters of a century ago, its breadth of vision, its sane and powerful arguments, and its confident faith in the coming triumph of the cause he ad-

vocated make it one of the most remarkable of temperance pleas and a permanent document of priceless value. We do well to-day to mark its expression of the true Lincolnian spirit:

With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE PRESIDENTS AND LIQUOR

There is no higher office than that of President of the United States. It is but natural that men should wish to use the luster and dignity attaching to that high office to advance a cause, and that the indorsement by the President of any movement should be counted of great value.

For nearly a century friends of temperance reforms have sought to identify with this cause our chief magistrates.

Edward C. Delavan in 1834 caused to be drawn up a statement that has become known as the "Presidents' Declaration," which reads as follows:

Being satisfied from observation and experience as well as from medical authority that ardent spirit as a drink is not only needless but hurtful, and that the entire disuse of it would tend to promote the health, the virtue, and the happiness of the community, we hereby express our conviction that, should the citizens of the United States, and especially the young men, discontinue entirely the use of it, they would not only promote their own personal benefit, but the good of our country and the world.

To this declaration were signed the names of Presidents Jackson, Madison, John Quincy Adams, Van Buren, Tyler, Polk, Taylor, Fillmore, Pierce, and Lincoln.

In a debate on Prohibition in the National Congress in 1914 a member declared:

"Washington was a distiller, Jefferson was a brewer, Lincoln was a saloonkeeper."

George Washington was, indeed, an extensive farmer, and as such he could with equal propriety be called a miller, a manufacturer, a pork-packer, or a stockman, as well as a distiller; for he had dealings in all these lines of trade. In his time almost every large farm in the country where grain or fruit was raised had its own still. There were reported 15,000 distilleries at that period. Washington had a number of plantations under the supervision of overseers, and each of these was expected to show the largest possible profits. Liquor made in the distillery on one of his plantations may have been sold just as meat and vegetables and even slaves were sold.<sup>1</sup>

In the days of Washington drink was a source of much trouble. In making a contract with an overseer he added the clause:

And whereas there are a number of whiskey stills very contiguous to the said plantation and many idle, drunken, and dissolute people continually resorting to the same, priding themselves in debauching sober and well-inclined persons, the said Ed Violet doth promise

<sup>1</sup> Ford, "The True George Washington."



for his own sake and his employer's to avoid them as he ought.

Washington also wrote about a man he employed to take charge of his Negro carpenters :

I am apprehensive that Green will never overcome his propensity to drink ; that it is this which occasions his frequent sickness, his absences from work, and his poverty.

One of the first orders General Washington issued when he took command of the Continental troops at Cambridge, March 25, 1776, contained this clause :

All officers of the Continental Army are enjoined to assist the civil magistrates in the execution of their duty and to promote peace and good order. They are to prevent, as much as possible, the soldiers from frequenting tippling-houses.

On May 26, 1778, Washington ordered a detail of a corporal and eight men with the commissary of each brigade, who were directed to confiscate liquors found in the vicinity of the camp, and also to notify the neighboring inhabitants "that an unconditional seizure will be made of all liquors they shall presume to sell in the future." He also issued this order :

All persons whatever are forbid selling liquor to the Indians. If any settler or soldier shall presume to act contrary to this prohibition, the former shall be dismissed from the camp and the latter receive severe corporal punishment.

Thomas Jefferson was also an extensive farmer, and his home at Monticello was described as a principal-ity of two hundred inhabitants. There were shops for shoemaking, tailoring, and weaving, and a mill for the accommodation of neighbors.

Jefferson, in a discussion of the work of the farmers, replying to the question, "What can we raise for the market?" said:

"Some say whiskey, but all mankind must become drunkards to consume it."<sup>2</sup>

As to the charge that Jefferson was a brewer, the only record is that he was so impressed with the evils of liquor-drinking that he wrote a letter favoring the manufacture of beer as a substitute for the more fiery distilled spirits, in which letter he said:

I wish to see this beverage common instead of whiskey, which kills one-third of our citizens and ruins their families.

During the period of the first widespread popular movement for temperance,—the Washingtonian,—there was so anti-alcoholic a sentiment that President

<sup>2</sup> "The Cyclopedia of Temperance, Prohibition and Public Morals," p. 156.

W. P. T. Ferguson writes: "There is no doubt that there was a certain toleration of the drink business among the Revolutionary fathers. This was particularly true as regards the manufacture of beer. The beer business was something very different from what it is now. There were no great brewing companies with millions of dollars of capital, corrupting politicians, intimidating city and state governments, controlling vice systems, and exploiting the working masses. It took almost one hundred years for the brewing business to develop to what it is to-day, and for its evils to begin to be recognized."

Polk opened the White House without wine upon his table.

About this time the venerable ex-President, John Quincy Adams, in an address, said :

I regard the temperance movement of the present day as one of the most remarkable phenomena of the human race, operating simultaneously in every part of the world for the reformation of a vice often solitary in itself, but as infectious in its nature as the smallpox or the plague, and combining all the ills of war, pestilence, and famine. Among those who have fallen by intemperance are included untold numbers who were respected for their talents and worth and exalted among their neighbors and countrymen.<sup>3</sup>

President Andrew Jackson authorized the abolishment of the spirit ration in the army. He declared that it had been shown by medical reports that "the habitual use of ardent spirits by the troops has a pernicious effect upon their health, morals, and discipline," and he ordered that "commissaries cease to issue ardent spirits as a part of the daily ration of the soldier." <sup>4</sup>

One of the most interesting chapters in the history of the White House, especially as concerning the liquor question, is the story of Mrs. Lucy Webb Hayes, wife of President Rutherford B. Hayes. Mrs. Hayes was the first mistress of the Executive Mansion who banished intoxicating liquor from social functions.

<sup>3</sup> Wooley and Johnson, "Temperance Progress," p. 482.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 411.

President and Mrs. Hayes were both total abstainers, and there was much curiosity as to what would be their attitude in the matter of serving liquors at official entertainments. When the Russian grand dukes Alexis and Constantine were guests at a White House dinner Secretary of State Evarts insisted that they were accustomed to wine at their meals and that it would be discourteous to Russia not to serve wine. Evarts' plea prevailed,—but only on this one occasion. It was the first and last time that intoxicants were served while Mrs. Hayes was in the White House.

There was bitter opposition and malignant criticism, of course, at the exclusion of liquor from ceremonial dinners. When Secretary Evarts argued the question with Mrs. Hayes and said it was an insult to foreign nations not to furnish wine, she replied:

“I have young sons who have never tasted liquor. They shall not receive from my hand, nor with the sanction that its use in our family would give, their first taste of what might prove their ruin. What I wish for my own sons I must do for the sons of other mothers.”

There were many delightful social receptions during the Hayes administration, and it was proved that there could be the most genial and hospitable entertainments without serving intoxicating liquors.

Former Ambassador Bryce says that while Washington “has become one of the handsomest capitals in the world,” no President has attempted to create a court. “As the earlier career of the chief magistrate and his wife has seldom qualified them to lead the

world of fashion none is likely to make it." He adds, however :

The action of the wife of President Hayes, an estimable and energetic lady whose ardent advocacy of temperance caused the formation of a great many total abstinence societies, called by her name (Lucy Webb), showed that there may be fields in which a President's consort can turn her exalted position to good account, while of course such graces or charms as she possesses will tend to increase his popularity.<sup>5</sup>

President Hayes, on the recommendation of General Miles, issued an executive order on February 22, 1881, as follows :

In view of the well-known fact that the sale of intoxicating liquors in the army of the United States is the cause of much demoralization among both officers and men, and that it gives rise to a large proportion of the cases before the general and garrison courts-martial, involving great expense and serious injury to the service, . . . it is therefore directed that the Secretary of War take suitable steps, as far as practically consistent with vested rights, to prevent the sale of intoxicating liquors as a beverage at the camps, forts, and other posts of the army.<sup>6</sup>

In 1899 Secretary of the Navy John D. Long issued an order forbidding the sale or issuing "of any malt or other alcoholic liquor to enlisted men, either on shipboard or in naval stations."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Bryce, "The American Commonwealth," Vol. I, p. 71.

<sup>6</sup> "Temperance Progress," p. 415.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 421.

Secretary of the Navy Daniels has added to this order the exclusion of all intoxicants from officers' messes, making the Navy "bone-dry." Mr. Daniels' order followed this expression from Surgeon-General of the Navy Braisted:

It may be stated as a fact that, except as a temporary expedient in certain cases of illness, the use of alcohol is harmful and its abuse disastrous alike to the individual and to the human race. Its use in the service is based upon worn-out customs, and there is no authority by law or otherwise for its continuance except as contained in the Naval instructions.

Mr. Daniels' dry order as to the Navy has been bitterly opposed by the liquor interests, but has been strongly indorsed by high officers in our own Navy, and also by officials of other nations. Much of the malignant opposition to Secretary Daniels is explained by the brutal efforts of the liquor interests angered by his naval wine mess order.

Admiral Dewey shortly before his death said:

I have been in the Navy sixty-two years and have served under many Secretaries of the Navy, but Secretary Daniels is the best Secretary we ever had and has done more for the Navy than any other. I am amazed by his knowledge of technical matters. He has studied profoundly, and his opinion is founded on close observation.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Letter from Mrs. Dewey to Senator Overman, "Cyclopedia of Temperance," p. 289.

The army canteen, as many will remember, had in recent times become practically a liquor saloon in which army officers were the barkeepers. In 1901, however, Congress by a large majority passed the following law :

The sale or dealing in beer, wine, or any intoxicating liquors, by any person, in any port exchange or canteen or army transport, or upon any premises used for military purposes by the United States, is hereby prohibited. The Secretary of War is hereby directed to carry the provisions of this section into full force and effect.

What is known as the Webb-Kenyon law, prohibiting the shipping of intoxicating liquors into any State when they are intended to be used in violation of State laws, was vetoed by President Taft in 1913. The Senate, however, overrode the President's veto by a vote of 63 to 21 and the House of Representatives by a vote of 244 to 95.<sup>9</sup>

One of the great shames of Christendom is the traffic in intoxicating liquors with the uncivilized nations. Dr. Wilbur F. Crafts says of this :

The liquor traffic among child races, even more manifestly than in civilized lands, injures all other trades by

<sup>9</sup> The United States Supreme Court, January 8, 1917, sustained the Webb-Kenyon law. The decision, read by Chief Justice White, contained the following :

"The all reaching power over liquor is settled. There was no intention of Congress to forbid individual use of liquor. The purpose of this act was to cut out by the roots the practice of permitting violation of State liquor laws. We can have no doubt that Congress has complete authority to prevent paralyzing of State authority. Congress exerted a power to co-ordinate the national with the State authority."

producing poverty, disease, and death. Livingstone said: "All I can say in my solitude is, May Heaven's richest blessing come upon every one, English, American, or Turk, who shall help to heal this open sore of the world." The United States government has long prohibited the sale of liquor to our Indians. Christian missionaries have been the leaders in the efforts to suppress the rum traffic, and we have said: "The vile rum in this tropical climate is depopulating the country more rapidly than famine, pestilence, and war."<sup>10</sup>

The efforts to suppress what has been styled "the burning curse of Africa" have had the sanction of several of our chief executives. President Benjamin Harrison said:

The men who have gone to heathen lands with the message, "We seek not yours, but you," have been hindered by those who, coming after, have reversed the message. Rum and other corrupting agencies come in with our boasted civilization, and the feeble nations wither before the white man's vices.

President Cleveland said:

It being the plain duty of this government to aid in suppressing the nefarious traffic, impairing as it does the praiseworthy and civilizing efforts now in progress in that region, I recommend that an act be passed prohibiting the sale of arms and intoxicants to natives in the regulated zone by our citizens.

<sup>10</sup> Dr. and Mrs. Wilbur F. Crafts, "Intoxicating Drinks and Drugs in all Lands and Times."



President McKinley, discussing the need of regulating the liquor traffic in Africa, said:

The principle involved has the cordial sympathy of this government, which in the revisionary negotiations advocated more drastic measures, and I would gladly see its extension by international agreement to the restriction of the liquor traffic with all uncivilized peoples.

President Roosevelt said:

In dealing with the aboriginal races few things are more important than to preserve them from the terrific physical and moral degradation resulting from the liquor traffic. We are doing all we can to save our own Indian tribes from this evil. Whenever by international agreement this same end can be attained as regards races where we do not possess exclusive control, every effort should be made to bring it about.

At this time a common statement in newspapers announcing the departure of a ship from Boston for Africa had been: "There were five missionaries in the cabin, and five hundred barrels of rum in the hold." In treaties of 1890, 1899, and 1906, however, according to Dr. Crafts, seventeen nations, Christian and Mohammedan, agreed to protect the natives of those portions of Africa not previously protected by Mohammedan laws in the north and by British laws in the south against the white man's "firewater."<sup>11</sup>

William O. Stoddard, who has been referred to in

<sup>11</sup> All the foregoing quotations on the subject of the African liquor traffic are taken from the book by Dr. and Mrs. Crafts.

preceding pages, had during his three and a half years in the White House exclusive charge of the correspondence of both Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln. On account of his duties in the social affairs of the Executive Mansion he was known as "Mrs. Lincoln's Secretary." Touching the attitude of Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln as to liquor during their incumbency of the White House, Mr. Stoddard has this to say in a personal letter:

The temperance atmosphere of the house may be well illustrated by an occurrence in the fall of 1861. Some gentlemen in New York, patriotic and kindly and mindful of the hospitality requirements of the President's mansion, sent on a fine collection of assorted and choice and fascinating wines and liquors. They were duly delivered, but Mrs. Lincoln at once sent for me in a state of consternation: "O Mr. Stoddard, what shall I do? Mr. Lincoln never touches any, I never do. He won't have a drop of it in the house." I really had to laugh at the good lady's perplexity, but could help her out. She was much interested in some of the military hospitals, visiting them. So I told her to acknowledge the gift to the kind givers with all courtesy and to send the entire consignment to the medical directors of her pet hospitals for what good it might do to them or to the patients. So it all went.<sup>12</sup>

As President, Lincoln approved of laws and measures limiting and prohibiting the sale or giving of liquor to soldiers. In 1861 Generals Butler, McClellan, and Banks issued orders excluding all liquors

<sup>12</sup> Personal letter from Mr. Stoddard.

from their commands. On August 5, 1861, the President signed an act of Congress providing

That it shall not be lawful for any person in the District of Columbia to sell, give or administer to any soldier or volunteer in the service of the United States, or any person wearing the uniform of such soldier or volunteer, any spirituous liquor or intoxicating drink; and such person offending against the provisions of this act shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction thereof, before a magistrate or court having criminal jurisdiction, shall be punished by a fine of \$25.00 or imprisonment for thirty days.<sup>13</sup>

On March 19, 1862, Lincoln signed an act of Congress making the Inspectors-General of the Army a board of officers with authority to prepare a list of articles that might be sold to the officers and soldiers in the volunteer service—with this limitation: "Provided always that no intoxicating liquors shall at any time be contained therein or the sale of such liquors be in any way authorized by said board."<sup>14</sup>

The advocates of the suppression of liquor in the navy were backed by the influence of Admiral Foote and Captains Dupont, Hudson, and Stringham, and on July 14, 1862, President Lincoln signed a law prohibiting the use of liquors for beverage purposes in the Navy, which contained the following provision:

And be it further enacted, That from and after the first day of September, 1862, the spirit ration of the navy

<sup>13</sup> U. S. Statutes at Large, Vol. XII, C. 44.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. XII, C. 47.

no distilled spirituous liquors shall be admitted on board of vessels of war except as medical stores, and upon the order and under the control of the medical officers of such vessels, and to be used only for medical purposes. From and after the said first day of September next there shall be allowed and paid to each person in the army now entitled to the spirit ration five cents per day in commutation and lieu thereof, which shall be in addition to their present pay.<sup>15</sup>

On September 29, 1863, a deputation from the Grand Division of the Sons of Temperance of the District of Columbia called upon President Lincoln and urged further methods of suppression of the evils of intemperance in the army. In his response the President said:

As a matter of course it will not be possible for me to make a response coextensive with the address which you have presented to me. If I were better known than I am, you would not need to be told that in the advocacy of the cause of temperance you have a friend and sympathizer in me. When I was a young man—long ago, before the Sons of Temperance as an organization had an existence—I in an humble way made temperance speeches, and I think I may say that to this day I have never by my example belied what I then said. In regard to the suggestions which you make for the purpose of the advancement of the cause of temperance in the army, I cannot make particular responses to them at this time. To prevent intemperance in the army is even a part of the articles of war. It is a part of the law of the land,

<sup>15</sup> U. S. Statutes at Large, Vol. XII, C. 164.

and was so, I presume, long ago, to dismiss officers for drunkenness. I am not sure that, consistently with the public service, more can be done than has been done. All, therefore, that I can promise you is, if you will be pleased to furnish me with a copy of your address, to have it submitted to the proper department and have it considered whether it contains any suggestions which will improve the cause of temperance and repress the cause of drunkenness in the army any better than it is already done. I can promise no more than that. I think that the reasonable men of the world have long since agreed that intemperance is one of the greatest if not the very greatest of all evils amongst mankind. That is not a matter of dispute, I believe. That the disease exists, and that it is a very great one, is agreed upon by all.<sup>18</sup>

Perhaps the most serious mistake in the wonderful political career of Abraham Lincoln was that he signed the Internal Revenue Bill, which, by laying a tax on liquors, did it in such a way that the business of making and selling liquors was put under the protection of the national government.

The story of the passage of the bill and Lincoln's approval is of great interest. It was in the second year of the great war, and the expenditures of the government were enormous in comparison with any previous experience of the Republic. It was also a critical time in military affairs. The Union armies had met with some serious defeats. The soldiers were unpaid. The proposed Revenue Bill exacted heavy

<sup>18</sup> Official Report of Sons of Temperance, 1864.

taxes on everything upon which such burdens could be laid. The proposal to exact large taxes from the makers and sellers of liquor provoked bitter debates in both houses of Congress. Among the leaders of both houses were sincere champions of prohibition, who were divided on the bill.

Senator Henry Wilson, of Massachusetts, made serious objection to the bill because it was a form of licensing the liquor traffic. He said:

"I look upon the liquor trade as grossly immoral, carrying more evil than anything else in this country, and I think the Federal government ought not to derive a revenue from the retailing of intoxicating drinks."

He had the foresight to prophesy that it would give the business of liquor-selling a respectable position.

"It will be hailed," he said, "from one end of the country to the other by the whole rum-selling interests of the country. . . . It will give immense power and strength to the liquor-selling interests."

Senator Grimes of Iowa and Senator Pomeroy of Kansas stood with Senator Wilson. On the other hand, Senator Fessenden of Maine, one of the strongest champions of prohibition, took the ground that the license of the revenue bill was only nominal, that it was really a tax, and did not authorize any sale of liquor contrary to State law.

The measure was introduced into the House of Representatives by Anson P. Morrill, also of Maine, another champion of prohibition. He favored the bill because it imposed a burden on the liquor traffic, saying:

"If you make this tax so high as to prohibit the traffic, which it does not propose to do, you can do no more valuable service to your country."

He declared he would favor a tax so high that it would wipe out the business, and also that if the sale of intoxicating liquors could be stopped "the country would suffer less by the war than it has and does from the use of intoxicating liquors."

Senator Wilson, while strongly opposed to the license idea, stated that he would favor a tax, and added:

"I would like to put enough tax on it to prohibit the manufacture of a single gallon of liquor in the whole country. If I had the power to do that and could do it, I should think that I was a public benefactor."

While the friends of prohibition were divided on the support of the Revenue Law, Secretary of the Treasury Chase pressed Mr. Lincoln in behalf of the empty treasury and made the plea that the soldiers and sailors and their families were in great need, and that money must be furnished. The Secretary and many friends of prohibition treated it as an emergency measure that would be revoked as soon as the war was over.<sup>17</sup>

The testimony of Major Merwin is of interest and value. In a private letter he says:

There were tens of thousands of soldiers, faithful, self-denying, patriotic and true, who had not been paid for

<sup>17</sup> Congressional Record, May, 1862.

months. Secretary Chase, a most accomplished and successful financier, had exhausted every resource of the country. The families of soldiers, to my certain knowledge, were without food, and some of them without shelter. Napoleon said, "Make the vices pay the bills," and so they came to President Lincoln and pleaded with him to recoup the empty treasury by taxing liquors. He revolted at once. "Never," said he, "will I consent to that infamy." Lincoln, great as he was and good as he was, was not so great as his party. He had to yield to the pressure—to my certain knowledge with the specific agreement that it was only and distinctly "a war measure," to be repealed as soon as the war was over. I know positively how the great Lincoln struggled days over this matter, but a person not conversant with existing conditions can form no idea of the pressure.<sup>18</sup>

In another letter Major Merwin writes:

Mr. Chase sent for me for two consultations on the matter, he was so much afraid I should advise against it. I told Mr. Lincoln, "I dare not advise you one way or another. I know the pressure for money to pay the troops. Please always stand on the positive agreement that it is to end with the war." From my personal knowledge that consent was obtained for his signature to the bill.

At the Anti-Saloon League convention in Columbus, Ohio, a few years ago Major Merwin gave similar testimony. He declared that in the presence of Senator Wilson, Secretary Chase, and himself, Mr. Chase said:

<sup>18</sup> Personal letter.



"Mr. Lincoln, we have got to have the resources of evil as well as good to end this rebellion, and we must have the resources. Mr. Lincoln, we cannot stand it any longer."

Then Lincoln said:

"I had rather lose my right hand than to sign a document that shall perpetuate the liquor traffic, but as soon as the exigencies pass away I will turn my attention to the repeal of that document."

If Lincoln had survived the war, there can be no question as to his seeking the repeal of a law that was so shrewdly manipulated by the liquor interests as to give an air of respectability to their business and so intrench it in law and add to their enormous financial gains.

It may be well to recall the fact that for nearly fifty years before the war there was no Federal tax on the liquor traffic. There were customs duties on imported liquors. While at this time there were no financial burdens put upon the liquor business, it was the period of the inauguration of the modern temperance reform. During that period there had arisen the American Temperance Society, the American Temperance Union, the Washingtonian and Father Mathew total abstinence crusades, and the beginnings of the fraternal temperance societies of which the Sons of Temperance was the pioneer. By the close of 1855 fourteen States were under prohibitory laws. Agitations for both abolition and temperance were before the country; but eventually the slavery question took the leading place until that issue was settled by the war. After the war

the liquor-makers, who for a time opposed the tax, found that the paying of so large a share of the expenses of the government by the revenue gave them place and power and made friends for them among many people who were not unwilling to evade taxes even at the shameful cost of partnership with a business so destructive and dangerous.

On the last day of Lincoln's life Major Merwin was a guest at the White House. He was to go as a special messenger from the President to Horace Greeley and others, to enlist their influence in forwarding a plan to employ colored troops in the construction of the Panama Canal.<sup>19</sup> After Lincoln had given to the Major the papers and the necessary instructions he said:

"Merwin, we have cleared up a colossal job. Slavery is abolished. After reconstruction the next great question will be the overthrow and suppression of the legalized liquor traffic, and you know that my head and my heart, my hand and my purse will go into the contest for victory. In 1842, less than a quarter of a century ago, I predicted that the day would come when there would be neither a slave nor a drunkard in the land. I have lived to see one prediction fulfilled. I hope to live to see the other."

<sup>19</sup> Major Merwin was on many occasions President Lincoln's personal guest at the White House, being associated with him in an unofficial and confidential capacity, to carry out important commissions. Such personal representatives are common with our Presidents. As an illustration: the relation of Colonel House to President Wilson.

Major Merwin thus concludes the story of this interview :

We shook hands and I left for Philadelphia and New York. That night the bullet of the assassin sent him into eternal silence.

Lincoln's fame shines brightest as the Great Emancipator. The names of the other noted advocates of immediate abolition do not maintain a rank so high as that of the man who put his name to the Emancipation Proclamation. So to-day, in reviewing the record of the war against liquor, from the obscurity of pioneer life, from the rudeness and drunkenness of the pioneer days, and through the progress of the reform to the time of its latest development, the name of Lincoln shines out as one of the most potent influences. His whole career, from the Kentucky log cabin to the White House, gives him a foremost place in this great moral movement for human welfare.



## CHAPTER VIII

### LINCOLN: AMERICA'S GREAT-HEART

Nicolay and Hay thus sum up the qualities that give Lincoln his place as one of the leaders of mankind:

To qualifications of high literary excellence and easy practical mastery of affairs of transcendent importance, we must add as an explanation of his immediate and world-wide fame his possession of certain moral qualities rarely combined in such high degree in one individual. His heart was so tender that he would dismount from his horse in a forest to replace in their nest young birds which had fallen by the roadside; he could not sleep at night if he knew a soldier boy was under sentence of death; he could not even at the bidding of duty or policy, refuse the prayer of age or helplessness in distress. Children instinctively loved him; they never found his rugged features ugly. His sympathies were quick and seemingly unlimited. . . .

To a hope which saw the Delectable Mountains of absolute justice and peace in the future, to a faith that God in his own time would give to all men the things convenient to them, he added a charity which embraced in its deep bosom all the good and the bad, all the virtues and the infirmities of men, and a patience like that

of nature, which in its vast and fruitful activities knows neither haste nor rest.<sup>1</sup>

Some years ago the present writer heard that Theodore Roosevelt had said he thought Abraham Lincoln was America's Great-Heart. A note of inquiry brought the following response from the White House, under date of November 30, 1908:

MY DEAR DR. MILNER:

Yes, you are entirely right. But I had no idea that what I said was being reported. Great-Heart is my favorite character in allegory (which is, of course, a branch of fiction, as you say), just as Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" is to my mind one of the greatest books that was ever written; and I think that Abraham Lincoln is the ideal Great-Heart of Public life.

Sincerely yours,

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

Great-Heart, it will be remembered, is the guide for Christiana and her children in the second part of Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." He is the brave but tender guide who leads the mother and children through many troubles, trials, and sorrows to the Eternal City. He fights battles with and triumphs over Giants Grim, Bloody War, Maul, Slay-Good, and Despair. He fights and conquers Apollyon. He leads those under his care safely through the Valley of Humiliation, to the borders of the Valley of the Shadow of Death. And after many battles they cross the Enchanted

<sup>1</sup> Nicolay and Hay, "Abraham Lincoln—A History," Vol. X, p. 354.

Ground to the land of Beilah, and then enter the Celestial City.

When we remember Lincoln's great-hearted sympathy with humanity; his gentle, beautiful character; his love for mankind, and his horror at injustice and cruelty, the title of Great-Heart is most fitting.

Lincoln had a horror of human slavery. In a letter to his friend Joshua F. Speed he tells of seeing on the boat from Louisville to the mouth of the Ohio ten or a dozen slaves shackled together with irons, and he says:

That sight was a continual torment to me, and I see something like it every time I touch Ohio or any other slave border. . . . I confess I hate to see the poor creatures hunted down and caught and carried back to their stripes and unrequited toil; but I bite my lips and keep quiet.<sup>2</sup>

James Russell Lowell wrote of him:

Wise, steadfast in the strength of God and true,  
How beautiful to see  
Once more a shepherd of mankind, indeed,  
Who loved his charge but never loved to lead—  
One whose meek flock the people joyed to be.<sup>3</sup>

We know how his great heart was moved by the suffering caused by the war, and his sympathy for the soldiers was so great that the stern Secretary of War, Stanton, charged him with weakening discipline by his refusal to allow soldiers to be shot for breaches of military regulations.

<sup>2</sup> Whitney, "Life and Letters," Vol. III, p. 190.

<sup>3</sup> Lowell, "Commemoration Ode."

What other ruler of a great nation ever gave hours of labor to details of cases of humble men under sentence, in order to find excuse for their pardon? He had a standing order that persons making application for pardon should be admitted at once to him. He agonized in spirit over men condemned to death and in scores of cases sent the despatch, "Suspend execution until further orders." And the "further orders" were never given.

When sharply criticised for his pardon of soldiers, he said:

"I am sick of this butchery business."

After sending a pardon to a young soldier condemned for sleeping on his post, he said:

"I can not think of going into eternity with the blood of that young man on my skirts."

When the war ended, Lincoln had no thought of revenge, but only of how he could best heal the scars of war. When it was proposed to starve Confederate soldiers because Union soldiers were being starved in Southern prisons, his reply was:

"Whatever others may say or do, I never can and never will be accessory to such treatment of human beings."

When he was urged to retaliate for the massacre of Negro soldiers at Fort Pillow he said he could not take men out and kill them in cold blood for what was done by others, and he added:

"Once begun, I do not know where such a measure would stop."

When victory came to the Union cause, he said:



"We must not sully victory with harshness." <sup>4</sup>

After Appomattox some prominent persons insisted that the leaders of the Rebellion should be dealt with severely, and demanded nothing less than their execution. The Great-Heart opened his Bible to Samuel II, and read the story of Shimei, who cursed and stoned David as he fled from Jerusalem at the rebellion of Absalom. After David was restored to power, Shimei sought a pardon. Abishai, nephew of the king, said he should be put to death because he had "cursed the Lord's anointed." Lincoln used the words of David:

"What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah, that ye should this day be adversaries unto me? Shall there any man be put to death this day?"

Lincoln had great sympathy with soldiers and the families of those who gave up husbands or brothers or sons to death in the service of their country. In

<sup>4</sup>Frederick Douglass, at that time the most noted representative of his race, called on President Lincoln, of which visit he says: "I was never more quickly or more completely put at ease in the presence of a great man than in that of Abraham Lincoln." Upon his visitor's urging that colored and white soldiers should have equal pay and promotion, Lincoln admitted the justice of the demand. Douglass, in referring to the President's position when retaliation was asked for colored prisoners killed by the enemy, says: "I shall never forget the benignant expression of his face, the tearful look of his eye and the quiver of his voice when he deprecated the resort to retaliatory measures. 'Once begun,' said he, 'I do not know where such a measure would stop.' He said he could not take men out and kill them in cold blood for what was done by others. If he could get hold of the persons who were guilty of killing the colored prisoners in cold blood, the case would be different, but he could not kill the innocent for the guilty."

Browne, "Every Day Life of Lincoln," p. 488.

his letter, already noted, to Mrs. Bixby, the mother of five sons who had "died gloriously on the field of battle," Lincoln expresses the wish that he might be able to comfort her in her grief, saying:

I pray that our heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

But while Lincoln's tender nature and greatness of heart were his preëminent qualities, it must not be thought that he lacked courage and iron resolution in carrying out his convictions in behalf of truth and justice. In emergencies he proved himself a man of the firmest decision of character, able to stand erect and face the greatest of storms. He proved in his own person and by the record of his life that

The bravest are the tenderest,  
The loving are the daring.

After his election to the Presidency there appeared to have been a change of feeling even among some of the men of prominence who had supported him. They feared that he had not sufficient strength of character to face the mighty conflict that was impending.

In reply to a letter of inquiry from Senator Henry Wilson of Massachusetts, Herndon wrote a remarkable letter on December 21, 1860, in which he said:

Lincoln is a man of heart—aye, as gentle as a woman's and as tender—but he has a will as strong as iron. He therefore loves all mankind, hates slavery and every form

of despotism. Put these together—love for the slave and a determination, a will that justice strong and unyielding shall be done when he has the right to act, and you can form your own conclusion. Lincoln will fail here, namely, if a question of political economy—if any question comes up which is doubtful, questionable, which no man can demonstrate, then his friends can rule him; but when on Justice, Right, Liberty, the Government, the Constitution and the Union, then you may all stand aside. He will rule then, and no man can move him—no set of men can do it. There is no failure here. This is Lincoln, and you mark my prediction. *You and I must keep the people right. God will keep Lincoln right.*<sup>5</sup>

Wilson still had doubts, but years later he admitted that these predictions had been fulfilled to the letter.

During the war it was almost the daily custom of the President to visit the Washington hospitals. He gave much of his vitality in the midst of his mighty cares to this sacrificial service. One of the army surgeons said:

“There was no medicine equal to the cheerfulness his visit inspired, but its effect upon him was saddening.”

One of the remarkable organizations connected with the Civil War was the “United States Christian Commission,” which not only ministered to the material wants of the soldiers but had also a distinctive work of spiritual ministry. It was largely under the direction of the Young Men’s Christian Association, and

<sup>5</sup> “Lincoln and Herndon,” p. 282.

the work now going on in the World's War is its fuller development. In the hall of the National House of Representatives on January 29, 1865, the Commission held a public anniversary meeting. A great throng attended and listened to reports of the work and a number of addresses.

The President and Mrs. Lincoln, members of the Cabinet and the Supreme Court, foreign ministers, officers of the Army and Navy, and many Congressmen and leading citizens were in attendance. Lincoln was deeply interested in the reports of those who had ministered to the sick and wounded on the battle-fields and in the hospitals.

It was noted by one who sat near the President that when Philip Phillips sang the song entitled "Your Mission" Mr. Lincoln was deeply moved and tears ran down his face. Secretary of State Seward, who presided over the meeting, received this note written on one of the programs:

Near the close let us have "Your Mission" repeated by Mr. Phillips. Don't say I called for it.

A. LINCOLN.

The following verse may explain his emotion:

If you cannot in the conflict  
Prove yourself a soldier true,  
If, where fire and smoke are thickest  
There's no work for you to do;  
When the battle-field is silent,  
You can go with careful tread,  
You can bear away the wounded,  
You can cover up the dead.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> "Annals of the United States Christian Commission," pp. 216, 256.

It would have been indeed wonderful if this man, so full of sympathy for his suffering fellow-men, had not had his soul stirred by the horrors of the drink habit and the drink traffic. While the facts as to his relations to the temperance reform were only imperfectly recorded at the time, they show that the cause had a large place in his mind and heart, and in every portion of his life he gave his testimony against the evils of drink. There is no need of any strained effort to magnify his interest in the temperance cause and his work in its behalf. We have given this record:

He was a lifelong abstainer; his first effort at literary composition was an essay on temperance; his first great speech, on Washington's birthday in 1842, was in behalf of total abstinence and the reform of drunkards; his first public identification with a great moral question was his work for the temperance reform.

There are on record many incidents that illustrate Lincoln's sense of the danger of drink and his interest in saving men from its evil power. In the days of the world's greatest war every effort was made to protect the young men in armies and navies from the evils of drink,—efforts that were perhaps not so personal as the one made in the following story told by a veteran of the Civil War at a Lincoln meeting. It shows Lincoln's abhorrence of the saloon and the drink habit:

"We have heard what Lincoln has done for all of us; I want to tell what he did for me," said the veteran. "I was a private in one of the Western regiments that

arrived first in Washington after the call for 75,000. We were marching through the city amid great crowds of cheering people, and then, after going into camp, were given leave to see the town. Like many other of our boys the saloon or tavern was the first thing we hit. With my comrade I was just about to go into the door of one of these places when a hand was laid upon my arm, and, looking up, there was President Lincoln from his great height above me, regarding me, a mere lad, with those kindly eyes and pleasant smile. I almost dropped with surprise and bashfulness, but he held out his hand, and as I took it he shook hands in strong Western fashion, and said: 'I don't like to see our uniform going into these places.' That was all he said. He turned immediately and walked away, and we passed on. We would not have gone into that tavern for all the wealth of Washington City. And this is what Abraham Lincoln did then and there for me. He fixed me so that whenever I go near a saloon and in any way think of entering, his words and face come back to me. That experience has been a means of salvation to my life. To-day I hate the saloon and have hated it ever since I heard those words from that great man." <sup>7</sup>

History shows that a number of our Presidents have said and done some things favorable to the temperance reform; but Lincoln, by his own lifelong personal example, and by his aggressive efforts in actual work as a public advocate in trying to protect the army from drink, did more than any other occupant of the presi-

<sup>7</sup> Dr. John Talmadge Bergen, *The Interior*, February 11, 1909.

dential chair. It is certain that there is no record of a single act of Lincoln's life, or of a single word that he ever spoke or wrote, which even suggests the slightest sympathy with any form of the drink habit or any favoring recognition of the liquor traffic.

Lincoln had indeed a prophetic vision of the end of slavery, and also of the end of drink bondage, when he said:

When the victory shall be complete—when there shall neither be a slave nor a drunkard on earth—how proud the title of that land which may truly claim to be the birthplace and the cradle of both those revolutions that shall have ended in victory. How nobly distinguished that people who shall have planted and nurtured to maturity both the political and moral freedom of their species.

This keen foreknowledge of what was to be would justify, even aside from other elements of his character and accomplishment, John Hay's estimate of his worth to his country and to humanity:

As, in spite of some rudeness, Republicanism is the sole hope of a sick world, so Lincoln with all his foibles is the greatest character since Christ.

And there can be no better summary of the real character of America's Great-Heart than this by the poet Markham:

But most he read the heart of common man,  
Scanned all its secret pages stained with tears,  
Saw all the guile, saw all the piteous pains,  
And yet could keep the smile about his lips,

Love and forgive, see all and pardon all;  
His only fault, the fault that some of old  
Laid even on God—that he was ever wont  
To bend the law to let his mercy out.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Edwin Markham, "The Coming of Lincoln."



AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE

SPRINGFIELD WASHINGTONIAN

TEMPERANCE SOCIETY,

AT THE SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

—ON THE—

22D DAY OF FEBRUARY, 1842.

—BY—

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, ESQ.

ANNIVERSARY OF THE SPRINGFIELD WASHINGTONIAN TEMPERANCE SOCIETY

SANGAMO JOURNAL, FEB. 25, 1842.—(EDITORIAL.)

This anniversary, the first of the kind celebrated in this county, passed off well. A procession was formed at 11 o'clock, at the Methodist Church, under direction of Col. B. S. Clement as Chief Marshal, and, escorted by the beautiful company of Sangamo Guards, under command of Capt. E. D. Baker, marched through some of the principal streets of the city, and reached the Second Presbyterian Church at 12 o'clock. The address, delivered by Mr. Lincoln, in our opinion, was excellent. The Society directed it to be printed. The singing delighted the immense crowd. Several pieces were a second time called for and repeated. Indeed, the whole was a most happy affair. The weather was delightful.



## APPENDIX

### ADDRESS

Although the Temperance Cause has been in progress for near twenty years, it is apparent to all, that it is just now being crowned with a degree of success hitherto unparalleled.

The list of its friends is daily swelled by the additions of fifties, of hundreds, and of thousands. The cause itself seems suddenly transformed from a cold abstract theory, to a living, breathing, active and powerful chieftain, going forth "conquering and to conquer." The citadels of his great adversary are daily being stormed and dismantled; his temples and his altars, where the rites of his idolatrous worship have long been performed, and where human sacrifices have long been wont to be made, are daily desecrated and deserted. The trump of the conqueror's fame is sounding from hill to hill, from sea to sea, and from land to land, and calling millions to his standard at a blast.

For this new and splendid success, we heartily rejoice. That, that success is so much greater now, than heretofore, is doubtless owing to rational causes; and if we would have it continue, we shall do well to inquire what those causes are.

The warfare heretofore waged against the demon intemperance has, somehow or other, been erroneous. Either the champions engaged, or the tactics they

adopted, have not been the most proper. These champions for the most part have been preachers, lawyers and hired agents, between these and the mass of mankind, there is a want of *approachability*, if the term be admissible, partially at least, fatal to their success. They are supposed to have no sympathy of feeling or interest, with those very persons whom it is their object to convince and persuade.

And again, it is so easy and so common to ascribe motives to men of these classes, other than those they profess to act upon. The preacher it is said, advocates temperance because he is a fanatic, and desires a union of the church and State; the lawyer from his pride, and vanity of hearing himself speak; and the hired agent for his salary.

But when one, who has long been known as a victim of intemperance, bursts the fetters that have bound him, and appears before his neighbors "clothed and in his right mind," a redeemed specimen of long lost humanity, and stands up with tears of joy trembling in eyes, to tell of the miseries once endured, now to be endured no more forever; of his once naked and starving children, now clad and fed comfortably; of a wife, long weighed down with woe, weeping and a broken heart, now restored to health, happiness and a renewed affection; and how easily it is all done, once it is resolved to be done; how simple his language, there is a logic and an eloquence in it, that few with human feelings can resist. They cannot say that he desires a union of church and State, for he is not a church member; they cannot say he is vain of hearing himself speak, for his whole demeanor shows he would gladly avoid speaking at all; they cannot say he speaks for pay for he receives none, and asks for none. Nor can his sincerity in any way be

doubted; or his sympathy for those he would persuade to imitate his example, be denied.

In my judgment, it is to the battles of this new class of champions that our late success is greatly, perhaps chiefly, owing. But, had the old-school champions themselves been of the most wise selecting, was their system of tactics the most judicious? It seems to me it was not. Too much denunciation against dram-sellers and dram-drinkers was indulged in. This, I think, was both impolitic and unjust. It was impolitic, because it is not much in the nature of man to be driven to anything; still less to be driven about that, which is exclusively his own business; and least of all, where such driving is to be submitted to, at the expense of pecuniary interest, or burning appetite. When the dram-seller and drinker were incessantly told, not in the accents of entreaty and persuasion, diffidently addressed by erring man to an erring brother; but in the thundering tones of anathema and denunciation with which the lordly judge often groups together all the crimes of the felon's life, and thrusts them in his face just ere he passes sentence of death upon him, that they were the authors of all the vice and misery and crime in the land; that they were the manufacturers and material of all the thieves and robbers and murderers that infest the earth; that their houses were the workshops of the devil; and that their persons should be shunned by all the good and virtuous, as moral pestilences. I say, when they were told all this, and in this way, it is not wonderful that they were slow, very slow, to acknowledge the truth of such denunciations, and to join the ranks of their denouncers, in a hue and cry against themselves.

To have expected them to do otherwise than they did—to have expected them not to meet denunciation with

denunciation, crimination with crimination, and anathema with anathema—was to expect a reversal of human nature, which is God's decree and can never be reversed.

When the conduct of men is designed to be influenced, persuasion, kind unassuming persuasion, should ever be adopted. It is an old and a true maxim, "that a drop of honey catches more flies than a gallon of gall." So with men. If you would win a man to your cause, first convince him that you are his sincere friend. Therein is a drop of honey that catches his heart, which, say what he will, is the great high road to his reason, and which, when once gained, you will find but little trouble in convincing his judgment of the justice of your cause, if indeed that cause really be a just one. On the contrary, assume to dictate to his judgment, or to command his action, or to mark him as one to be shunned and despised, and he will retreat within himself, close all the avenues to his head and his heart; and though your cause be naked truth itself, transformed to the heaviest lance, harder than steel, and sharper than steel can be made, and though you throw it with more than herculean force and precision, you shall be no more able to pierce him than to penetrate the hard shell of a tortoise with a rye-straw. Such is man, and so must he be understood by those who would lead him, even to his own best interests.

On this point, the Washingtonians greatly excel the temperance advocates of former times. Those whom they desire to convince and persuade are their old friends and companions. They know they are not demons, nor even the worst of men; they know that generally they are kind, generous and charitable, even beyond the example of their more staid and sober neighbors. They are practical philanthropists; and they glow with a generous and brotherly zeal, that mere theorizers are incapable of feel-

ing. Benevolence and charity possess their hearts entirely; and out of the abundance of their hearts, their tongues give utterance, "Love through all their actions run, and all their words are mild;" in this spirit they speak and act, and in the same, they are heard and regarded. And when such is the temper of the advocate, and such of the audience, no good cause can be unsuccessful. But I have said that denunciations against dram-sellers and dram-drinkers are unjust, as well as impolitic. Let us see.

I have not enquired at what period of time the use of intoxicating liquors commenced; nor is it important to know. It is sufficient that to all of us who now inhabit the world, the practice of drinking them is just as old as the world itself—that is, we have seen the one just as long as we have seen the other. When all such of us as have now reached the years of maturity first opened our eyes upon the stage of existence, we found intoxicating liquor; recognized by everybody, used by everybody, repudiated by nobody. It commonly entered into the first draught of the infant, and the last draught of the dying man. From the sideboard of the parson, down to the ragged pocket of the houseless loafer, it was constantly found. Physicians prescribed it in this, that and the other disease; Government provided it for soldiers and sailors; and to have a rolling or raising, a husking or "hoe-down" anywhere about, without it was *positively unsufferable*. So too, it was everywhere a respectable article of manufacture and of merchandise. The making of it was regarded as an honorable livelihood, and he could make most, was the most enterprising and respectable. Large and small manufactories of it were everywhere erected, in which all the earthly goods of their owners were invested. Wagons drew it from

town to town; boats bore it from clime to clime, and the winds wafted it from nation to nation; and merchants bought and sold it, by wholesale and retail, with precisely the same feelings on the part of the seller, buyer and by-stander, as are felt at the selling and buying of plows, beef, bacon, or any other of the real necessities of life. Universal public opinion not only tolerated, but recognized and adopted its use.

It is true, that even then, it was known and acknowledged that many were greatly injured by it; but none seemed to think the injury arose from the use of a bad thing, but from the abuse of a very good thing. The victims of it were to be pitied, and compassionated, just as are the heirs of consumption, and other hereditary diseases. Their failing was treated as a misfortune, and not as a crime, or even as a disgrace.

If then, what I have been saying is true, is it wonderful that some should think and act now as all thought and acted twenty years ago, and is it just to assail, condemn, or despise them for doing so? The universal sense of mankind, on any subject, is an argument, or at least an influence not easily overcome. The success of the argument in favor of the existence of an over-ruling Providence, mainly depends upon that sense; and men ought not, in justice, to be denounced for yielding to it in any case, or giving it up slowly, especially when they are backed by interest, fixed habits, or burning appetites.

Another error, as it seems to me, into which the old reformers fell, was the position that all habitual drunkards were utterly incorrigible, and therefore, must be turned adrift, and damned without remedy, in order that the grace of temperance might abound, to the temperate then, and to all mankind some hundreds of years there-



after. There is in this, something so repugnant to humanity, so uncharitable, so cold blooded and feelingless, that it never did, nor never can enlist the enthusiasm of a popular cause. We could not love the man who taught it—we could not hear him with patience. The heart could not throw open its portals to it, the generous man could not adopt it, it could not mix with his blood. It looked so fiendishly selfish, so like throwing fathers and brothers overboard, to lighten the boat for our security—that the noble-minded shrank from the manifest meanness of the thing. And besides this, the benefits of a reformation to be effected by such a system were too remote in point of time to warmly engage many in its behalf. Few can be induced to labor exclusively for posterity; and none will do it enthusiastically. Posterity has done nothing for us; and theorize on it as we may, practically we shall do very little for it, unless we are made to think we are, at the same time, doing something for ourselves.

What an ignorance of human nature does it exhibit, to ask or expect a whole community to rise up and labor for the temporal happiness of others, after themselves shall be consigned to the dust, a majority of which community takes no pains whatever to secure their own eternal welfare at no greater distant day? Great distance in either time or space has wonderful power to lull and render quiescent the human mind. Pleasures to be enjoyed, or pains to be endured after we shall be dead and gone, are but little regarded, even in our own cases, and much less in the cases of others.

Still in addition to this, there is something so ludicrous, in promises of good, or threats of evil, a great way off, as to render the whole subject with which they are connected easily turned into ridicule. "Better lay down that spade you're stealing, Paddy—if you don't, you'll pay for

it at the day of judgment." "Be the powers, if ye'll credit me so long I'll take another jist."

By the Washingtonians this system of consigning the habitual drunkard to hopeless ruin is repudiated. They adopt a more enlarged philanthropy, they go for present as well as future good. They labor for all now living, as well as hereafter to live. They teach hope to all—despair to none. As applying to their cause, they deny the doctrine of unpardonable sin, as in christianity it is taught, so in this they teach—

"While the lamp holds out to burn,  
The vilest sinner may return."

And, what is a matter of the most profound congratulation, they, by experiment upon experiment, and example upon example, prove the maxim to be no less true in the one case than in the other. On every hand we behold those who but yesterday were the chief of sinners, now the chief apostles of the cause. Drunken devils are cast out by ones, by sevens, by legions; and their unfortunate victims, like the poor possessed, who was redeemed from his long and lonely wanderings in the tombs, are publishing to the ends of the earth how great things have been done for them.

To these new champions, and this new system of tactics, our late success is mainly owing; and to them we must mainly look for the final consummation. The ball is now rolling gloriously on, and none are so able as they to increase its speed and its bulk—to add to its momentum, and its magnitude—even though unlearned in letters, for this task none are so well educated. To fit them for this work they have been taught in the true school. They have been in that gulf from which they would teach others the means of escapes. They have passed that

prison wall which others have long declared impassable; and who that has not, shall dare to weigh opinions with them as to the mode of passing?

But if it be true, as I have insisted, that those who have suffered by intemperance personally, and have reformed, are the most powerful and efficient instruments to push the reformation to ultimate success, it does not follow, that those who have not suffered, have no part left them to perform. Whether or not the world would be vastly benefited by a total and final banishment from it of all intoxicating drinks, seems to me not now an open question. Three-fourths of mankind confess the affirmative with their tongues, and, I believe, all the rest acknowledge it in their hearts.

Ought any, then, to refuse their aid in doing what good the good of the whole demands? Shall he, who cannot do much, be, for that reason excused if he do nothing? "But," says one, "what good can I do by signing the pledge? I never drink, even without signing." This question has already been asked and answered more than a million of times. Let it be answered once more. For the man to suddenly, or in any other way, to break off from the use of drams, who has indulged in them for a long course of years, and until his appetite for them has grown ten or a hundred fold stronger, and more craving, than any natural appetite can be, requires a most powerful moral effort. In such an undertaking he needs every moral support and influence, that can possibly be brought to his aid, and thrown around him. And not only so, but every moral prop should be taken from whatever argument might rise in his mind to lure him to his back-sliding. When he casts his eyes around him, he should be able to see all that he respects, all that he admires, all that he loves, kindly and anxiously pointing him onward,

and none beckoning him back to his former miserable "wallowing in the mire."

But it is said by some that men will think and act for themselves; that none will disuse spirits or anything else because his neighbors do; and that moral influence is not that powerful engine contended for. Let us examine this. Let me ask the man who could maintain this position most stiffly, what compensation he will accept to go to church some Sunday and sit during the sermon with his wife's bonnet upon his head? Not a trifle, I'll venture. And why not? There would be nothing irreligious in it; nothing immoral, nothing uncomfortable—then why not? Is it not because there would be something egregiously unfashionable in it? Then it is the influence of fashion; and what is the influence of fashion, but the influence that other people's actions have on our own actions—the strong inclination each of us feels to do as we see all our neighbors do? Nor in the influence of fashion confined to any particular thing or class of things. It is just as strong on one subject as another. Let us make it as unfashionable to withhold our names from the temperance pledge, as for husbands to wear their wives' bonnets to church, and instances will be just as rare in the one case as the other.

"But," say some, "we are no drunkards and we shall not acknowledge ourselves such, by joining a reformed drunkard's society, whatever our influence might be." Surely no christian will adhere to this objection.

If they believe as they profess, that Omnipotence condescended to take on himself the form of sinful man, and, as such, to die an ignominious death for their sakes, surely they will not refuse submission to the infinitely lesser condescension, for the temporal, and perhaps eternal salvation of a large, erring, and unfortunate class of

their fellow creatures. Nor is the condescension very great. In my judgment such of us as have never fallen victims, have been spared more from the absence of appetite, than from any mental or moral superiority over those who have. Indeed, I believe, if we take habitual drunkards as a class, their heads and their hearts will bear an advantageous comparison with those of any other class. There seems ever to have been a proneness in the brilliant, and warm-blooded, to fall into this vice—the demon of intemperance ever seems to have delighted in sucking the blood of genius and of generosity. What one of us but can call to mind some relative, more promising in youth than all his fellows, who has fallen a sacrifice to his rapacity? He ever seems to have gone forth like the Egyptian angel of death, commissioned to slay, if not the first, the fairest born of every family. Shall he now be arrested in his desolating career? In that arrest, all can give aid that will; and who shall be excused that can, and will not? Far around as human breath has ever blown, he keeps our fathers, our brothers, our sons, and our friends prostrate in the chains of moral death. To all the living everywhere, we cry, “Come sound the moral trump, that these may rise and stand up an exceeding great army.”—“Come from the four winds, O breath! and breathe upon these slain that they may live.” If the relative grandeur of revolutions shall be estimated by the great amount of human misery they alleviate, and the small amount they inflict, then, indeed, will this be the grandest the world shall ever have seen.

Of our political revolution of '76 we are all justly proud. It has given us a degree of political freedom far exceeding that of any other nations of the earth. In it the world has found a solution of the long mooted prob-

lem, as to the capability of man to govern himself. In it was the germ which has vegetated, and still is to grow and expand into the universal liberty of mankind.

But, with all these glorious results, past, present, and to come, it had its evils, too. It breathed forth famine, swam in blood, and rode in fire; and long, long after, the orphans' cry and the widows' wail, continued to break the sad silence that ensued. These were the price, the inevitable price, paid for the blessings it bought.

Turn now, to the temperance revolution. In it we shall find a stronger bondage broken, a viler slavery manumitted, a greater tyrant deposed—in it, more of want supplied, more disease healed, more sorrow assuaged. By it, no orphans starving, no widows weeping. By it, none wounded in feeling, none injured in interest; even the dram-maker and dram-seller will have glided into other occupations so gradually as never to have felt the change, and will stand ready to join all others in the universal song of gladness. And what a noble ally this, to the cause of political freedom, with such an aid, its march cannot fail to be on and on, till every son of earth shall drink in rich fruition the sorrow-quenching draughts of perfect liberty. Happy day, when all appetites controlled, all poisons subdued, all matter subjected; mind, all conquering mind shall live and move, the monarch of the world. Glorious consummation! Hail fall of fury! Reign of reason, all hail!

And when the victory shall be complete—when there shall be neither a slave nor a drunkard on the earth—how proud the title of that *Land*, which may truly claim to be the birthplace and the cradle of both those revolutions, that shall have ended in that victory. How nobly distinguished that people, who shall have planted and nur-

tured to maturity, both the political and moral freedom of their species.

This is the one hundred and tenth anniversary of the birthday of Washington—we are met to celebrate this day. Washington is the mightiest name of earth—long since mightiest in the cause of civil liberty, still mightiest in moral reformation. On that name a eulogy is expected. It cannot be. To add brightness to the sun, or glory to the name of Washington is alike impossible. Let none attempt it. In solemn awe pronounce the name, and in its naked deathless splendor leave it shining on.





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